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The Week

THE outstanding fact about the result of the New York municipal election is not Mr. Walker's victory nor the size of his vote, but the connivance in it of those New Yorkers who are professionally interested in good government and social improvement. This connivance is based on the assumption that the Tammany of Walker, Olvany and Governor Smith is a regenerate association which no longer deserves the denunciation which its enemies used to hurl at its behavior. There is probably something to be said for this less censorious attitude. The opportunity for corruption on a large scale does not exist to the same extent that it did in Richard Croker's time. The public utility companies no longer have the same motive for purchasing franchises and privileges. It is probably also true that the Tammany politician and district leader is less hostile to social workers than he was fifteen years ago and is willing to recognize the value of their services. Tammany has its own interest in the welfare of the poorer people of the city, and its leaders understand better than they did their need of expert assistance in promoting this welfare. New York City is not in any real sense a community, but the Tammany Society is the most real and effective community within its boundaries. Tammany may in the future do more than any other agency to bridge the gulf between the social worker and the people who are most in need of expert philanthropic assistance.

IN our opinion there is, however, no reason to believe that Tammany has essentially changed or that, if it deserved the denunciations of the days of Seth Low and John Purroy Mitchel, it has ceased to deserve them today. Tammany remains an organization which is occupied primarily in converting the opportunities of public office into sources of private profit. It exists in order to divide among its members political pickings of all kinds, and no matter how far Governor Smith may have lost interest in serving this need, the Tammany leaders and workers have not and will present their notes for payment. They will take their pay in the shape of petty graft at the city's expense. The important change between New York politics of today and New York politics of twenty years ago is not a change in Tammany Hall. It is a change in the standards whereby the behavior of public officials is measured. There is a smaller number of people now than there was then whose scruples are offended by dishonesty in office. The dishonesty itself is probably less serious and costly than it used to be, but it is more connived at. The people who elected Mr. Walker conceive American government and American society as agencies for the dispensation of privileges, favors and personal opportunities. The pressure on their part to grab their share will be terrific. It is written that New York during the next four years will be a wide-open city in which people who know what they want can carry on to their heart's content without any officious interference from the authorities.

THE ratification by the voters of the state of New York of the proposal to reorganize the state government is the first conspicuous triumph of the agitation for the short ballot. The agitation began about twenty years ago. Its advocates attributed the inefficiency and in part the corruption of American state and municipal governments to the large number of officials which the voter was obliged to select or reject and the impossibility in the circumstances of an intelligent exercise of his power of

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choice. The argument on behalf of reducing the number of elective officials was unanswerable. The long ballot had proved to be an obstacle rather than a help to the voters whenever they wished to obtain a government which awakened and expressed positive popular preferences. Yet the agitation against it has achieved only a meagre success. It exerted for a while some influence on the forms of municipal government, but until recently almost none on the forms of state government. Its great effort was the proposed new constitution for New York which was framed by the convention of 1915, and overwhelmingly rejected by the voters in the fall of that year. Then the War came and fomented a distracted and impatient state of mind which discouraged agitation for domestic reforms. The passage of the proposed amendment prophesies, we hope, a revival of the popular interest in political experiments which was so characteristic of the period of Mr. Roosevelt's administration and immediately thereafter.

POSSIBLY other states will imitate the example set by New York and both shorten their ballots somewhat and improve their mechanism of administration. But if so, any results which may be accomplished will, so long as the prevailing political conditions continue, remain subject to two grave limitations. The party politicians will not allow any reorganization to take place which will seriously compromise their own power, and the ordinary voter will not for the present show much interest in the reforms. They will be brought about, if at all, as the present reform in New York is being brought about, by a bi-partisan combination of influential lawyers and political leaders who happen to understand how far the future ability of the states to carry on their essential functions in the American system will depend upon a reorganization of state government. The mass of the voters will remain indifferent. They are alienated from American government as it is now usually conducted. They realize vaguely their impotence to control it, and this realization discourages them from taking a lively and intelligent interest in its better conduct. They have become sceptical about the utility of any projects to reform it. The resulting cleavage between the American voters and their government is unfortunate, but it will not quickly disappear. It will continue until a majority of the American people wish once again, as they did one hundred years ago, to accomplish by political means economic and social improvements advantageous to themselves and are not afraid to confront and overcome the obstacles in their path.

IT looks as if the House Ways and Means Committee in fixing tax rates had been as kind to large taxpayers as Secretary Mellon recommended, and kinder to small ones. The maximum rate of surtax has been cut just in half—from 40 percent to 20 percent. The estate tax has not been abolished, but its maximum—applicable on estates of $10,000,000 or over—has been reduced from 40 to 20 percent, and the several states may receive rebates up to 80 percent of the proceeds. The difference in revenue to the federal government between this and complete abolition cannot be great. The 25 percent reduction for "earned income" is retained, and the limit to which it applies is extended from $10,000 to $20,000. Exemptions have been increased—for single men from $1,000 to $1,500, and for married men from $2,500 to $3,500. Children are to be considered dependents up to 21 years instead of to 18. It is announced that these changes exempt from taxation a million more people. Since the Committee is fairly certain to yield to pressure for abolition or drastic reduction of automobile and other nuisance taxes, it may be taken for granted that it will reduce the total tax yield considerably more than the Secretary asked. If the yield turns out to be lowered in proportion to the rate cuts, the nation will be forced into the unsound policy of retiring its debt much more slowly instead of more rapidly, as it should. If in spite of the cuts the yield should rise again, due to the growth of population, industry and profits, we suppose the Treasury will attribute that fact to the halving of the surtax and will demand its further reduction.

AT just one point, however, the Committee has been more severe on income taxpayers than the Secretary of the Treasury. While retaining the 25 percent reduction for "earned income," which Mr. Mellon did not recommend this year, it has increased the normal rates. The net result is no more burdensome on those in the lower brackets except for bachelors receiving between $2,500 and $4,000 per year. Under the Mellon rates an unmarried man with $4,000 would be exempted for $1,000 and pay 1 percent, or $30.00, on the remaining $3,000. Under the Committee rates he would be exempted for $1,500, but would pay 1½ percent, or $37.50, on the remaining $2,500. The Committee's tax is higher than the Secretary's on this class of income down to $2,500, where the two become equal at $15.00. We do not know whether the Committee intended for any good reason to discriminate against bachelors of small income, but it is interesting that the only case in which the reduction is not as good or better than the Treasury wanted is that of this numerous class in the lower brackets. If the principle is sound why not extend it by extra heavy surtaxes on millionaire bachelors as well?

PAINLEVE'S fall as finance minister and premier is certain, and his fall will presage the financial doom of France. His program, rejected by the Socialists because it does not place enough burden on capital, is unacceptable to the right because it places too much. He proposes, by a series of special levies

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on all forms of property and income, to raise about 80,000,000,000 francs over a period of fourteen years, or about 6,000,000,000 a year, for a separate fund to retire the floating part of the 300,000,000,000 public debt. The 1926 budget, however, with all possible reduction of expenses will really fail to balance by at least 8,000,000,000 francs, and the proposed yearly addition to receipts would not be sufficient to wipe out the deficit, to say nothing of creating a surplus for dept retirement. Only if a large part of the proposed levy were raised in the first few years could any debt retirement be achieved. After that another levy might be necessary. It is significant that a part of the program is another increase in the legal limit of the circulation and of advances to the government from the Bank of France. This, Painlevé promises, is to be the last such increase, and is to be reimbursed out of future proceeds of the special levy. But every increase since 1920 has been "the last"; not unless a finance ministry should arrive which was able to do without pushing up this barometer of inflation could we be sure that the crisis was passed.

HOW difficult it would be to procure acceptance by the propertied elements even of Painlevé's inadequate program may be seen by a glance at some of its details. In addition to existing collections it provides for a tax on improved property of one and one-half times its income for 1925, for a tax on business profits of 50 percent, for a tax on securities of 15 percent of their yield, and so on—all, to be sure, payable over a period of 14 years. Altogether it would increase existing annual tax collections by about one-fifth, if payments were evenly distributed throughout the period. French tax collections now amount to 20 percent of the national income—while our Congress is yielding to irresistible pressure for reduction of taxes equal to not much more than 10 percent of the national income. The Socialists' proposal of a capital levy of 10 percent payable over fourteen years would, they believe, yield 150,000,000,000 francs or over 10,000,000,000 francs a year. This would increase taxes to nearly 30 percent of the national income, and would place the extra burden wholly on property owners. While barely sufficient to solve the fiscal difficulty, this tax is obviously impracticable politically, and would probably cause too much economic dislocation to be possible of collection. There seems to be no way to avoid repudiation of the national debt—either frankly and in part by an arbitrary reduction of the rate of interest, a course which no government seems to have the courage to propose, or indirectly and entirely by continued inflation, which looks like the inevitable outcome.

THE strongest influence in the reconstructed French cabinet is certainly Aristide Briand. The Locarno treaties which he negotiated as minister for foreign affairs are the only possible success which the government can show to balance the disconcerting occurrences in the financial and colonial departments. Whether it is enough to keep the ministry in power for a time and put him in Painlevé's place will be soon decided. Meanwhile Briand realizes the close connection between the costly policy in Morocco and Syria and the failure to balance the budget. He is obviously willing to let M. Painlevé pull the financial chestnuts out of the fire; but he is lending a hand himself in other directions. It was M. Briand who announced to the Cabinet Council the new policy in Syria, according to which the mandate will be administered to meet the needs of the native population, with a larger measure of autonomy. The question of course remains whether this change of front is not too late, whether the long standing distrust of the French has not been strengthened by recent occurrences into a national demand which will be satisfied with nothing short of independence. As to Morocco, Marshal Petain's return to France is taken as a sign that the campaign is over. Abd-el-Krim has been driven out of most of the territory recently gained by him, French prestige has been vindicated, and negotiations for peace leaving the Riffians in autonomous possession of their mountain stronghold and the Ouerga valley which is their granary, may now be undertaken to save the French from the expense of an army in winter quarters during the rainy season, as well as of another costly offensive. Morocco falls under the department of foreign affairs, and it may be expected that in its settlement M. Briand's moderating influence will be felt. Altogether, M. Briand may fall heir to the opportunity to save France, an opportunity greatly compromised by his predecessors, but still a possible one.

AT this moment the Stock Exchange presents a spectacle not unlike the Florida real estate offices. People are buying stocks in huge quantities, and driving up prices, not because they expect to hold the stocks and receive a return adequate to the price they have paid, but because they expect to sell the stocks shortly at higher prices to others who will expect to sell them shortly at higher prices and so on ad infinitum. Probably most of the buyers are shrewd enough to know that this process can not continue forever, though it remains to be seen which ones will be shrewd enough to foresee precisely the point at which it will stop. If there are any innocents who really believe that it can go on, they should note that last week the loans on stock exchange collateral made by banks of the Federal Reserve System increased $37,000,000, being $167,000,000 more than a month ago and $206,000,000 more than a year ago. Bank credit for stock speculation, though large, is by no means inexhaustible, and when the loans tighten up the market will fall. All this indicates that the market boom is neither an accompaniment nor a forerunner of commensu-

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rate business profits. Production, while it has been on the upgrade, is not so high as it was at the beginning of the year or in 1923. Wholesale prices, with the exception of rubber, have not risen appreciably. With neither abnormally large production nor abnormally large prices, profits cannot jump high enough to justify the present prices of shares.

AT THE meeting of the Alumni Council at Amherst last week two theories of the American college were set forth. The historical conception of the institution as a "self-contained separate unit" was upheld by President E. M. Hopkins of Dartmouth; the modern conception of the college as the anteroom of a university, toward which it has been drawn by the influence of graduate and professional schools, was developed by Dean H. M. Hawkes of Columbia. Naturally to President Hopkins the ideal place for the college is the country town; to Dean Hawkes, the city. Indeed, it may be said that the country environment naturally determines President Hopkins's type of college, as the city does Dean Hawkes's. There is necessarily something forced and artificial in the stimulation of university growth in Hanover or Amherst; such growth is almost inevitable in Boston, New York or Chicago. The essential point of opposition between the two themes, however, is not in place but in time. Is the four year course of the "separate unit college" a natural period in the whole scheme of education, corresponding to definite needs on the part of the student, to be met by definite resources and methods of a strictly college curriculum? Or is it a romantic survival, capable of adaptation to the modern situation in the hands of such able administrators as President Hopkins, but, by and large, involving a waste of time amounting to some two years?

ONE argument in favor of the latter view is the difficulty of filling the four year course with genuine intellectual interests in competition with sports and miscellaneous activities. It will be said that the university colleges show, on the whole, a greater tendency to dissipation and waste of time on the part of the undergraduate than the best of the separate unit colleges. This is explainable. The undergraduate body of the separate unit college under such leadership as that of President Meiklejohn at Amherst, President Neilson at Smith, and President Hopkins can be stirred to intellectual interest, and organized for it, more easily than the inchoate mass of the university undergraduates. If the universities believe that the natural division in higher education falls at the end of the second collegiate year, as Dean Hawkes asserts, their logical course is to follow the example of Johns Hopkins and abolish their freshman and sophomore classes, leaving the studies appropriate to those years to the genuinely undergraduate institutions and the junior colleges.

The Political Wonder-Worker

THERE were not many elections this fall; nor did anybody allege that their result compromised the safety of society. But such as they were, they make fair reading. Not, of course, coherent reading like Mr. Brisbane's editorials or Frank Crane's essays. Rather it was tabloid journalism, all high spots, no background and no explanations. The highest spot of all was, of course, Governor Al Smith of New York, the Tammany purifier, the statesman who never reads a book, the spoilsman who has persuaded the people to vote for good government, the Bowery Lincoln.

It is very rare that a politician can become a legend before he becomes a corpse, but Al Smith has done it, and that in spite of the fiercest conceivable publicity. He is the king of our people, in so far as they live in cities, speak many languages, dislike highbrows, prigs, big-wigs and fanatics and prefer their human favorites to machines, governments, parties, organizations or "movements." He is, of course, in particular the king of Little Old New York. Twice within the last eight years the common-or-garden New Yorkers who ride the subways expressed an overwhelming confidence in Mr. Hylan as their savior and king. He defended them, as he had been commissioned to defend them, against their foes in Wall St. and on Fifth Ave. Last summer, however, this other king, less noisy and nearer to their hearts, entered the enchanted wood and slew their lusty champion. Then without a murmur they allowed the victor to name the successor of the vanquished leader. Probably more than eighty percent of the hero-worshipers who voted for Hylan four years ago voted for Walker on last Tuesday. Most of them thought they knew a good deal about Hylan, and about Walker they did not, unless they were Tammany insiders, know much of anything. It was enough that their Lord had bestowed his blessing on the Boy.

The good people, it seems, have such complete trust in Al Smith that they will not only vote for him but for any candidate or any proposal which he endorses. The ratification of the three amendments to the state constitution which Governor Smith had sponsored, two of them by huge majorities, smacks also of the legendary days in which men were giants. It is well known to politicians that the plain people, unless they are bewitched, enthusiastically reject proposals which tend to impair their own apparent powers and strip the lining from their pocketbooks. Governor Smith's proposed amendments to the state constitution not only threatened the spending of hundreds of millions on improvements, but they diminished the number of state elected officials and reorganized the state government in the interest of efficiency. Ten years ago the people of the state had voted down by a colossal majority a new constitution which looked in a similar direction. In the case of one of the

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amendments, that providing for a bond issue of $100,000,000 to rebuild the state charitable and penal institutions, the Republican leaders had exerted all their power to defeat it. But Al Smith is simply not to be defeated. Even up the state among the rugged rural voters, his enemies fared ill. He plays the pipe, and his charmed people obediently dance to the tune.

Another high spot, at least in the neighborhood of New York, is the huge shifting of the vote which now takes place between the parties and among the candidates. A year ago President Coolidge polled about as many votes in Greater New York as his Democratic opponent, Mr. Davis. Today the Democratic candidate for mayor runs over 400,000 ahead of the Republican. A year ago Mr. Coolidge carried New Jersey by a plurality of many thousand. Today the Democratic candidate for governor is elected by a plurality of 50,000. This migration of the vote does not mean that the Republican party and the Coolidge administration are losing the confidence of the people. It means that in the large cities the voters are simultaneously both Republicans and Democrats. They vote or are capable of voting for both parties at the same time in different connections. They are not either non-partisan or independent. They are bi-partisan and disillusioned. They realize that they get the same brand of government from both parties. Why vote for any one party? Why vote at all? The two parties have ceased to be alternatives except for those who have something to gain by keeping up the pretense.

Politics is now as completely dominated by the machines of the two major parties as it was during the eighties of the last century. The professional politicians are more than ever our masters. After fifty years of struggle they have finally defeated their enemy, the reformer. The people never took very kindly to reform except on occasions when its propagandists could work upon their moral sensibilities. But now they are consciously suspicious of any mixture of morality with politics. Whenever they detect a serious reformer they shoot him on sight. Prohibition has obscured reform in the eyes of the American city voter for at least a generation. The chief object which the ordinary citizen is interested in voting for is to be let alone. That is the reason why in his hospitable stomach a dose of Al Smith can be digested on the same day as a dose of Calvin Coolidge.

Professional politicians, however, would do well not to wax too jubilant over this result. In the eighties of the last century the people who voted Democrat or Republican believed in Democracy or Republicanism. Today this is no longer true. When they vote for both parties they are not really voting for either. They have become indifferent, cynical and lethargic. The extinction of reform has brought with it scepticism about the reality in politics of all ideas and of all progressive outlooks. Neither is this scepticism confined to the ordinary voter. The reformers themselves are primarily responsible for the death of reform. They have ceased to take their own campaigns seriously. When they had to choose, they increasingly acted as if party allegiance was more important in politics than progressive convictions. As the result of the impotence and resignation of the reformer the old parties are more powerful than ever, but they are not respected, loved and served as they once were. They have little reality or significance except as the creatures of those vested political and business interests which have some reason to dread progressivism in politics. The American voter is being gradually but thoroughly educated to distrust and despise both parties. His distrust is an advantage to the politicians at present because of his inertia, complacency and resignation, but it will not be an advantage to them when any very large number of voters again desire to achieve positive social and economic objects by political action. As soon as that day comes the new progressives will have no doubt about the necessity of starting their agitation with the organization of a new party which is capable of serving as a trustworthy servant of their purposes.

For the present, however, politics, particularly state and municipal politics, has lost much of the sustained and serious interest which it formerly provoked in the urban American. He does not in the old sense "belong" to any political party. There is little that he wishes to do to other people by means of political power. There is only a great deal that he must prevent other people by the same means from doing to him. He is prosperous. He is chiefly occupied in converting his increased purchasing power into leisure, security, comfort, warmth, diversion, excitement and high living. The America to which he belongs is an economic and a cultural rather than a political society. He has inherited some of the individualism of the American pioneer democrats, but none of their homogeneity of blood and purity of political tradition. He is first of all the member of racial, national or economic groups, and among these groups the political bond is weak and political authority by way of looking alien and forbidding. The ideas and activities which these polyglot Americans share with the members of other groups are formed, not by common traditions, but by organized publicity. They all follow the same fashions, adore the same movie queens, swear by and at the same baseball players and prize fighters and live mentally on the same verbal tabloids and sugar plums and spiritual hooch. The combination between prosperity and publicity has forged them into regular fellows, and they are anxious to behave like regulars in politics, business, morals and social affairs. But America is becoming their country. They are the people, and the only rule or rules which they really recognize must make allowance for many exceptions in their own favor.

These urban voters, lacking as they do common

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political traditions, do not act together in politics except under the influence of fears or under the spell of personal fascination. They need a hero to worship and they have fastened for the time being on Al Smith. He is their political Charlie Chaplin and Babe Ruth. His peculiar mixture of boyishness and sophistication, his hat cocked on the side of his head, his cigar in his mouth, his eastside dialect, his convivial habits, his easy-going toleration of failings in himself and others and his steady opposition to all kinds of proscription and censorship —all these traits stamp him as their representative. He is the living response to their most characteristic appeal to one another, which is to have a heart. On the strength of his recent triumph he is about to begin another attempt to ride into the White House on their shoulders. The effort will be a good thing for them. Their interest in him will enormously enhance their interest in politics as well as their political self-consciousness. On the other hand his renewed aggressiveness will reinvigorate the Klan which will concentrate on preventing his nomination. This fight to prevent the nomination of Al Smith will be the first engagement in a revival under new conditions of the old battle between the American village and the American city. And it looks for the moment as if neither the village nor the city, neither the Nordics nor the polyglots, neither the small town reformers nor the urban unregenerates will win a victory or derive much advantage from the contest. The real victor is likely to be Calvin Coolidge and the Republican party who will try to keep out of the struggle but who will benefit from the resulting animosities. Yet it will be the centralized and subsidized industrialism of the Republicans rather than Al Smith and his hyphenated adorers who are the real enemies of the American rural communities.

Coal, Mr. President

As cold weather creeps in and stocks of anthracite fall away, the cries of the consumer for a settlement of the strike grow louder. The government is called upon to act. But again we are assured from Washington that the President does not intend to intervene. What reasons are there for this position, and how good are the reasons? Is any better course possible, and if so, what?

The anthracite operators have settled upon their objective, and the President is acting exactly as they want him to act. They want to fight out the strike and defeat the miners. They want to do this, not merely to avoid the necessity of granting present demands, but chiefly to prevent the miners from striking in the future. They do not hope to destroy the union, but they do hope to force it into a position where it must accept continuous arbitration. They want the union to agree in advance to arbitrate any possible future dispute. This would relieve them of the necessity of bargaining with it, or of yielding to demonstrations of economic power. It would insure them against future suspensions, with the immediate losses that might be involved, and the danger — whatever it might be — that the consumers would turn permanently to substitutes. Evidently they do not fear arbitrators' decisions under these circumstances. They have good reasons for this, which will be touched upon presently.

If the President should act to settle the strike, he would upset this plan. He has no power to impose arbitration, either for this issue or permanently. There is doubt whether even Congress could do more in this direction than to set up a voluntary board. Intervention if successful would necessarily result in a compromise. This would mean concessions from the operators in the present instance, and an undefeated union, which might make further gains in exactly the same manner after the expiration of the new contract.

The justification for the operators' position presented to the public is ingenious. We admit, say the operators, that you may be suffering from lack of coal and high prices. But that is not our fault. We proposed arbitration and a continuance of mining pending a settlement, and the miners refused both. We are now fighting for arbitration; if we win you will never have to suffer again. Therefore bear with your present discomfort in order to support us in your own interest. Do not call on the President for action. If you force him to act, the result is bound to be an increase in wages, which— say the operators with appealing innocence—will of course be passed on to you. And there is no end to that process.

Besides the temporary suffering caused by this course, suffering which must become acute before the operators could succeed in their purpose, the public incurs the risk that the miners may in the end remain undefeated and force a settlement which might be achieved now. Even if the plan can be carried through, however, it is necessary to examine its justice to the miners. For if the miners are unjustly treated they will become dissatisfied, and if they become dissatisfied they will in the long run revolt again, no matter what arbitration machinery is adopted. The basic problem is not to set up a machine for settling disputes, but to satisfy the workers that they are receiving equitable treatment.

In previous issues we have explained why the miners are now willing to fight rather than arbitrate. They tried arbitration in 1920. Representatives from both sides were appointed to a board, and an "impartial" arbitrator, who of course had the deciding vote, was chosen. Elaborate evidence was presented by the union bearing on the profits and the ability to pay of the employers. This evidence was thrown out as having no bearing on the issue. The board then informally agreed to increase wages as much as the rise in the cost of living since the previous adjustment, and employed an economist to find out what that rise had been. He found

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that it had been 27 percent, and the miners understood that his verdict was to be accepted. He was discharged, however, and overnight the "impartial" arbitrator changed his mind. He awarded only 17 percent—precisely the amount offered by the operators before the arbitration began. The miners did not accuse the arbitrator of lack of probity. But they did ask why an individual unknown to them and to the industry should be given arbitrary power over the kind of lives they, their wives and children must lead, when he had no similar power over their employers. Why should wages alone be fixed in this way, when prices and profits were not fixed—were not, indeed, even considered?

In the present dispute the operators refused to bargain with the union, or to make any substantial concession. They stood pat on a denial of union demands and a demand for an agreement to arbitrate. Voluntary arbitration is often employed by the American trade unions, it is true. But it is one thing for a union to engage in genuine negotiations for the settlement of disputes, backed by the economic power of a possible strike, and then to consent to arbitrate specific differences which cannot be settled by agreement. It is quite another thing to agree in advance of any genuine negotiation not to strike and to arbitrate everything, especially when the employers' profits are unknown and are likely to be called irrelevant by the arbitrator. Many unions employ voluntary and limited arbitration, but few if any sanction compulsory, permanent arbitration, whether imposed by the government or any other force.

Must the public then suffer periodic shortages of coal in order to avoid injustice to the miners? Must it in order to end each shortage, suffer higher prices following intervention and wage increases? We fear that it must until it takes the initiative in revealing and controlling profits. Standardize accounting practices of the operators and bring about continuous publicity of the facts. End the undue salting away of excess profits in depletion and surplus accounts. Effect a pooling of profits so that the least efficient and most costly mine may not keep wages down and prices up. See that profits are considered by mediating or arbitrating boards. Do these things and it will be easier to give the miners justice, and to satisfy them with what they get. Do these things and you will make possible wage increases without price increases. Do these things and you will lay the groundwork for fair arbitration and hence for continuous mining.

We note that the President intends to urge upon Congress passage of some of the recommendations of the Coal Commission. In this connection it must be remembered that while Congress can do something, it probably cannot within its constitutional power effectuate adequate public control of the anthracite industry. The authority of the several states must also be invoked for that. Consumers who are suffering from the strike would do well, therefore, to call upon their state governments to meet with the government of Pennsylvania to draft, for ratification by Congress, an interstate treaty setting up real control. This long and clumsy process seems to be necessitated by our federal system of government, but we believe it the only path to permanent relief. It cannot help now, but if we begin it now we may be saved the next strike, or the strike after that. If the President really wants to begin a big job in the best way, this is what he will tell the coal consumers. And if the operators want to escape the growing pressure for control, they will voluntarily consent to impartial accounting publicity, and will engage in genuine negotiation. Without pressure they will do nothing. It is your duty, Mr. President, to direct that pressure.

Learn While You Sleep

A REVOLUTIONARY discovery was recently announced in the newspapers. It appears that the radio has uses far beyond the dreams of its inventors. An unnamed victim, presumably of the male sex, was put to bed with a head-set over his ears. In a very short time, in spite of the obvious discomfort, he was sound asleep. He slept for the customary eight hours, during which time he was, unwittingly, the recipient, via the radio head-set, of considerable educational matter, all of which, upon waking up in the morning, he turned out to have learned by heart. From eleven at night until seven the next morning, his plastic unconscious mind was assaulted by an explanation of the binomial theorem, the story of Washington's crossing the Delaware, an original proposition in plane geometry—with diagrams, select passages from Hiawatha, and the irregular French verb meaning to pay a debt, or debts, or some, but not all, debts. At seven an alarm clock, broadcasted from Buffalo (the victim was in Terre Haute) woke him up. After a hearty breakfast (for study, even in sleep, induces hunger) he recited upon the matter which had just been pumped into his subconscious, and was pronounced 60 percent correct. This is unbelievably high. It is high enough to get anyone through any college. But the victim was not a particularly promising specimen. He was a replacer of defective parts in tractor transmissions, and had never been to high school. Therefore the results are all the more astonishing.

It is curious that this discovery was not made earlier. Of course, science has known for a long time that the mind in a somnolent, or even a somnolescent state, is peculiarly receptive to suggestion and even information. The psychological basis of the phenomenon is perfectly simple. The consciousness may go to sleep, but the mind never does. While the body rests, and the throat snores, the mind, like a racing engine in a motionless automobile, performs wonders of fantastic narrative.

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These are called dreams. The nonsensical intricacy of dreams is useless except for the purpose of deceiving a certain school of psychologists—some of whom are called gypsies, others, more colloquially, Freudians. Dreams, since they serve no better purpose, must go. The space they now occupy must be filled. The fact that the dream-gap has never before been filled is a blot on the escutcheon of human intelligence.

In the wakeful state, the powers of the human mind to resist information and guidance are prodigious. In sleep, these powers are no longer exerted. Professors, unfortunately, have never recognized this obvious fact, and resent even the simulation of sleep in their classes, whereas, on the contrary, they ought to encourage it. But since nothing we can say will ever change the prejudices of the professors, we must turn to this newest development of the radio for the fulfilment of the nation's greatest need, education.

The prospect opened up by the experiment upon the man from Terre Haute is exhilarating. We are a nation of workers, Florida to the contrary notwithstanding. We hate to give up our work even in order to get educated. Several hundred thousand of us over the working age of eighteen are at college. These boys and girls will never give up the things that colleges are famous for, football, junior proms, sororities, pocket flasks, raccoon coats and glee clubs, in exchange for mere education. Many of them indeed can only study in their painfully acquired spare time. To all such, and to the great American public athirst for culture, the radio which teaches while you sleep will be an epoch-making blessing. People will at last have their cake and eat it too. Even the cake-eaters.

Taking a jump into the future, we can imagine the life of the average citizen immeasurably enriched by the discovery that knowledge can enter into him, as it were, via the Ostermoor. Within a year or two, nine thirty-five will find Mr. John Gutz, citizen and monkey-wrench merchant, at his desk on the ninth floor of the Consolidated Asset and Liability Building. The day will pass in dictating letters, evading callers and biting the ends off ten-cent cigars. Mr. Gutz will go to lunch with a big customer, and tell him the story of the girl from Duluth. After lunch his routine will be varied by a personal call from the representative of the Learn-o-Radio Company, and Mr. Gutz will sign up for a six weeks General Culture course. When he gets home, he will find the head-set hanging by the head of his bed. He will go to bed earlier than usual, but, being in a state of some excitement, will remember nothing, even though he heard it, of the first half-hour on the history of bee-keeping. Eventually, under the influence of a discourse on vital statistics among the janitors of Atlantis, he will fall asleep. From that point on he will begin to learn. By learning we do not mean that he will be training his mind, which has never been the serious purpose of education, but that he will remember, not in substance or in part, but in toto, everything which has been imparted to him over the radio. He will wake up the next morning to recall, with literal accuracy: the multiplication table up to forty-nine times forty-nine (which will help him in his business); the full names, addresses and positions of all state and county officers (which will make him interested in self-government); the principal parts of speech in Swedish (which will go far toward solving the servant question); the Gettysburg address (for possible use on the Fourth of July); a list of all paintings by Rubens, the size thereof, the subject, and where now located (which will give him an insight into the world of art); and the name, price, and major specifications of every passenger automobile manufactured in the U. S. A. (which will increase his powers of conversation in the world of men). All at a moderate charge, without the slightest contribution of effort on his part.

Night after night knowledge (or information—they are much the same) will pour in upon him. Mr. Gutz will astound his customers by his familiarity with the populations of their native towns, and his miraculous grasp of the principal names in Persian literature will compel other monkey-wrench merchants to elect him President of their Association. But gradually he will find that the efforts of the radio company cause other men to creep up on him. Some of them, by sleeping late Sunday mornings, will even manage to surpass his knowledge of famous burial grounds in Missouri. But the radio people are ready for Mr. Gutz, and switch him, at a slight increase in price, to the Advanced Course. Which is the same as the elementary course, only backwards. So that Mr. Gutz, if the monkey-wrench field isn't productive, can make a little money in the two-a-day reciting the Declaration of Independence from the signatures back to the thunderous culminating Whereas.

After Mr. Gutz and all his fellow citizens and his sisters and his cousins and his aunts have been playing Addison Sims forwards and backwards for a number of years, they will find happily filled up in their minds those chinks formerly occupied by thought—too much of which never did anybody any good anyway.

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Amy Lowell

Memory Sketch for a Biographer

THAT Amy Lowell's creative spirit occupied a large and unwieldy body is important because the triumph lay with the spirit. Her handsome head, unflinching in its carriage, had much to reckon with. First, perhaps, a passionate and untrammelled heart. Next, physical illness, disability, and a kind of fleshly discomfort that no woman could bear in youth without suffering self-consciousness, and the sense of a lost Paradise. Yet I doubt if I have known a maturity as full-flavored and wholly sustaining as Amy Lowell's. Every twisted strand, every quirk in her destiny which earlier challenged normality and happiness became woven into the warp and woof of a noble and dedicated career. There was at last nothing she would have altered if she could, even her mortal shape. It was, you may be sure, her own keen, not too charitable eyes which, looking down on a figure which they could not admire, decreed that it should be encased in a trim uniform of rich dark satin, with stiff boned collar and undersleeves of net, and that it should become, with all its limitations, an adornment and enhancement of that great personage, Amy Lowell.

The high, square, mansard-roofed, brown stone mansion where this poet was born, and where—mirabile dictu (for what other American author can claim such stability?)—she lived and died, might again, like her body, have been a prison rather than a principality, but for the exuberance of her vitality and the determination of her will. Embowered in old trees and lawns and gardens in the more manorial part of Brookline, Sevenels was a very monument of security, financial, social, traditional. The woman who inherited these slippery floors, this high ceiled Victorian spaciousness and ease, had no need save of inward impulse to watch night fade into day through the jalousies of long French windows, with only a black cat for company, as she scratched crooked lines on yellow paper. What Amy Lowell's world expected of her was the enjoyment of an easy conformity, and when, instead, she began to batter her tough and individual intention upon thick walls of prejudice; when, straining against Bostonian precedent, she not only made friends with actresses, and gave plays on Sunday afternoons, but actually published "free" verse in the Atlantic Monthly her career and aims were taken as a sort of eccentric scandal. It was not until her poetic leadership was acclaimed from continent to continent that she became a jewel in the crown of a great Massachusetts family.

Those who have conquered poverty and obscurity in the service of an art cannot perhaps measure the fortitude of those who conquer riches, cushions, and conventions to the same end. Amy Lowell had endurance as well as hardihood. She could count, and did, on the strength of her backbone. Undoubtedly there were many stresses that she could never know, and one misses the trace of them in her poetry. However revolutionary her rhythms, her politics remained solid Republican, and she kept—wished to keep—many of the privileges and superiorities of a social group that prided itself on birth, breeding, learning, civic power and worldly substance. Yet when one drove up to the fine portal of Sevenels, in the green gloom of a summer evening, it was never to dine with the cousin of James Russell Lowell, or with the sister of the President of Harvard University, or, if one were a friend, to pay tribute to a celebrity. When the smiling Timothy had opened the door of the car and rung the polished silver bell, and one had entered that vast antlered hall, and sat down in the formal drawing room where flowers and paintings bloomed in a soft light, it was always with the sense that this was the abode of an artist. A spirit that transcended the luxury and formality that the eye declared brooded over the scene. It was a zestful spirit, spontaneous, vitalizing, and suddenly it took shape in a voice. A voice high pitched in timbre as the roof it emerged from, sonorously hallooing, summoning one up two flights of stairs to share the mystery of the bedchamber.

For Amy Lowell chose to wake and sleep not in the high-ceiled, piano nobile part of her house, but on that more informal level above, that rookery under the slated eaves where she could more easily perform her conjuring trick of turning midnight to morn and morn to midnight, and by another special prescription, accord the most insistent telephone bell with the most abysmal silence. Here, too, kimonas and typewriters, secretaries and—in their time—Scotch sheep dogs, maids and visitors, breakfasts and lunches, fires and electric fans, manuscripts and bandages, keen pointed pencils and blunt pointed cigars, could be mingled in that highly organized confusion and bustle which were the spice of a poet's more executive hours. Her wide, low bedroom, opening off a wide low hall, and bursting with books like all the rest of the house, was the centre of her kingdom and her wide low bed was the very nucleus of this central cell; it had exactly sixteen pillows and was sunned and cooled by a couple of dormer windows overlooking the sunken garden where, in summer, fireflies were sometimes seen to light their lamps along the round, clipped evergreens before she left it for a dinner late and ever later. I have seen her reading in that bed under a black umbrella in the bright light of mid-afternoon, smoking, of course, the equally black

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cigar; I have seen her "making" it—as she did always with her own hands—at one a. m., the faithful Irish maid whom she adored and abused, standing by to plump the pillows. I loved her best in these unpanoplied moments, without her pompadour and topknot, her hair in a little flat twist, her innocent blue dressing gown, the style of which must have been determined at the age of sixteen, enhancing the blue candor of her walls, with their bluer Hiroshigis. Her face at such moments was candid too; Amy Lowell en deshabille was a New England vestal, despite the colossal tiled bath room that marked her a sybaritic empress, and the manuscript volumes, neatly typed by the secretaries, that piled themselves on the mahogany centre table to mark her a genius; despite the stream of command, vituperation and imperious affection—redeemed all three from portentousness or sting by the flashes of Johnsonian humor and the warm radiation that carried them—that poured forth as the servitors and friends who ever accompanied her performed the detail of her ritual.

For Amy Lowell was a New England autocrat of the old school, one of those who make life stir about them, and instinctively take the foremost place. No Puritan however, if Puritans are neutral-tinted. (She herself declared they were the reverse.) She could not help arousing sensation wherever she went—love or hate, curiosity, suspense, drama. She lived dramatically, and opulently, always for spectators, whether at home or abroad: taking her seat in the front row of a theatre, accompanied by a friend with a foot stool and the turning of a hundred heads; delivering a lecture, invariably by the light of her own extra-watt electric lamp; merely dictating a letter, or ordering a meal. Her arrival at a hotel, as for instance at that high corner suite at the Hotel Belmont, in New York, where she stopped several times a year, was melodrama itself. In half an hour, every large mirror was swathed in black, every clock stopped, and woe to the waiter who did not produce ten or twelve pitchers of ice water in a twinkling, and begin to sharpen his steel dinner knives. Woe to the housekeeper who had not prepared the sixteen pillows and the soft old linen. Woe to the ticket agency that had not saved its best seats for the low-brow plays, and the editors of the magazines who were not besieging the telephone.

It is not an accident that the two human beings who most profoundly influenced Amy Lowell's artistic and human destiny—Eleanora Duse and Ada Russell, the devoted and charming friend, now her literary executor, whose advent at Sevenels marked the turn of her career—belonged both to the stage. The poet might, she often said, have been an actress herself, or a playwright. One of her publishers attributed to her the "publicity sense," not of a generation but of a century. In any case she had a genius for catching the public eye, quite as marked as her gifts as a writer. This is the keynote of her outward career, her rôle of standard bearer for imagism, her extraordinary brilliance as a reader, her wit as an entertainer. There is no doubt that it was she more than anyone else who put the "new poetry" "on the map," and restored the profession of poet to respectability, even to romance, in these United States. She could by sheer dynamic attraction draw a mammoth audience anywhere, any time, to listen to verse whose subtleties only the initiate could possibly understand.

Yet—to return to Sevenels, as Amy Lowell always did with a sigh of pleasure—here was a woman seemingly made for a public rôle, a prima donna if ever there was one, conditioned both by her physique and by the serious pursuit of an art to lead a quasi-cloistered life; and what is more, elaborately protected by circumstance and by the peculiar habit she had ordained for herself from the varied human contacts and adaptations that release and drain the energies and emotions of those of us who get up in the morning, swallow our food as it comes, and fit our lives and work into a precarious universe. Even in that great old house which became a true extension of herself, as necessary to her as the shell to the turtle, she began to write when others retire to rest, went to bed as early birds arise, sleeping the morning away, breakfasting at two or three in the afternoon, delving with her secretaries till dark, on that fabulous poetic correspondence which she carried on like a business, slowly dressing for a formal dinner, and beginning the day's work again at eleven or midnight.

A thoroughly self-determined and self-conscious existence, like that, if one is to believe the stories, of M. Marcel Proust. The world that Amy Lowell lived in was in a real sense her own creation, a work of art. A considerable measure of its accident, suspense, danger and difficulty had then to be fabricated out of her overplus, by mental or vicarious or fantastic means. No wonder she attached such intense possessive value to every fragment of it, material and human. At Sevenels, as in a palace, there could be no insignificant acts; none that, worked upon by a vigorous imagination, did not hold the potentialities of a scene or a climax; none that had not gathered to themselves a kind of ceremonial. Nor could there be any insignificant objects of art or use. Bountiful though she was in giving, it was, for example, a point of pride with her never to loan a book from her fine library; those who wished to read her volumes must come to Brookline.

In the realm of the affections the same laws held. Sympathetic to overflowing, tenderly solicitous for friends, servants, dependents, especially when they were ill, she would have liked to be to them the fount and source of all blessings. It was unthinkable that their lives should revolve in individual orbits, that they should choose their own doctors, take their own vacations, live in cities where she was not. Her real predilection, she declared, was

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for a society of slaves. Lacking that, she managed to enslave, not by ignoble means but with bonds of solid affection, all those whose lives touched hers: editors, publishers, reviewers, columnists; cooks, waiters, chauffeurs; human beings who brought stimulus and solace to her leisure, power to her various strenuous pursuits; masculine peers and feminine rivals in the fields of poetry, criticism, book collecting; and all the hosts of youth. And the bond once forged was strong, occasionally restricting to the stride of the independent, hampering to Amy Lowell herself. For the tyrannous one was the greatest of all the slaves, where a tie of affection was in question. Take the case of the seven Scotch sheep dogs. Who can forget their seven ceremonial bowls of exquisite food, brought into the library after a dîner intime, set each in its exactly appointed spot on the shiny floor or the rugs, while evening frocks were spread with bath towels against snuffing black noses. Well, between their scheme of dietetics, their devourings of timid minor poets—who modestly arrived afoot, instead of letting themselves be fetched in the maroon car—and their ardent devotion, their owner was at last brought to a choice: sheep dogs or poetry? But Amy Lowell did not find foster homes for her darlings, or sell them in the market place. She had her children killed.

Yet she was a loyal friend and true, who respected and wanted strong characters about her—not just cushions for her ease—and got them, too. It is exciting to live in the neighborhood of gunpowder when you are not afraid of it. She valued her intimates for themselves, and also, objectively, for their achievements, and gave them, if they were writers or actors or musicians—the types of artists she best understood—a more genuine and generous meed of criticism and appreciation than they could hope to find on any other hearth in the country. How often did she dedicate her precious night watches to reading and commenting the verses of some young gentleman in or out of college, some poetic duckling who might or might not turn into a swan. She was openly and honestly "jealous" of women whose literary gifts she respected, yet this emotion was with her no canker in the heart of social intercourse. Being openly expressed in a poem or a phrase—for Amy Lowell knew no inhibitions—it transformed itself quickly into a tribute of hearty admiration. The ceremonials of the great square dining room, to which one descended with Mrs. Russell an hour after dinner had been announced, but well before the rites of the upper floor had been completed, resolved many a literary dispute. If dignity and æsthetic charm reigned here below, so also did a kind of warmth and ease and freedom that lifted the guest as on a floating cloud on a halcyon day.

When, half way through the long perfection of the meal the hostess appeared, now cap à pie, dressed in her fine dark green, full of capacious humor and hearty appetite, she was usually, to be sure, ready to demolish in talk the most distinguished adversary. If necessary, she would metaphorically speaking shake him to quiescence, with queer jerks of the head, like a terrier with its prey. She could be ruthless, especially in those earlier years when both she and the movement she was sponsoring were on the defensive. If her tremendous drive encountered an obstacle that drove it back upon itself, she was dangerous as a tidal wave in her destructive force. But by the time she became, as I think she did, the most arresting and conspicuous figure among American authors, she brought even to controversy the amenity of assurance. Then that forthright, buccaneering maleness of her, that eighteenth century gusto for meeting and defeating others in talk, that fecund interest in books and scholarship and the craft of letters, that hardy curiosity about "Men, Women and Ghosts" came into its real rights, and made an evening at her house memorable and rich among literary and human adventures.

I have only to stare into the crystal of memory to see again that beloved Amy Lowell world, which has now vanished away, forming itself before my eyes in the sort of free, shifting, kaleidoscopic pictures of which she herself was such a past master and conjurer. Here is an outside terrace, starred with purple bougainvillea, above a gentle slope descending to a garden full, like a bowl of dim splashed colors, summer mist, glints of fire. A young poet and a scholar are talking of Coleridge. A poetess is performing, with humorous absorption, the ritual of the goldfish. Their diet, too, was overlooked by their god, and how fascinated was an imagist by the hungry nosings and translucent tremors of the fish. Remember An Aquarium:

> Slow upshifts,
> Lazy convolutions:
> Then a sudden swift straightening
> And darting below.

But the crystal does not hold long any outdoor picture. Amy Lowell scarcely belonged even in her own garden, among poppies and blue salvia. Though her poetry is so largely visual, reflects so many forms and colors of The Floating World (how happy her titles were, by the way) though for her, as for Keats, forgetfulness of a "harassing personality" had come from "living in the eye alone," she possessed, as she points out that Keats did, the power of "swift registration of images." A very little of the spectacle went a long way. One literary visit to England served her where others need many. One page of Chinese poetry or Indian folklore was a substitute for an actual paysage or a night by a tepee. "Poetry is seldom written in the midst of an action or state of being. Reflection is its essence; it is the perfume of something that has been but is not." And so Amy Lowell, even on a

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summer evening, loved the serenity of the great, lamplit library, the fire, the lace curtains shutting out the reality of the sensuous universe, wafting ghost scents of grass and trees and flowers, which waxing more potent in the imagination, brought her close and closer to the creative, indwelling mood of the night to come.

Now the picture in the crystal sharpens and deepens. Here are two ladies, facing each other across a seignorial vastness of hearth. The atmosphere is charged. By the signs, there will be a "poetry burst" before the small hours have waned. Meanwhile the striking central figure moves restlessly. Sinks into a great armchair, like a man's. Cuts her cigar, like a man. Adjusts the lights like a woman, suspending from every lamp, just so, a little shade with dancing elfin figures. Throws on to the perfection of the hearth those logs split so thin that she could lift and replenish them through the long night. I see a little Constable. A photograph of the Quai des Fleurs. A vista of polished tables, reflecting white flowers. High walls of books. I hear a voice, a full, powerful resonant voice reading a poem. Perhaps the poem the public later always calls for:

> I would be the pink and silver as I ran along the paths,
> And he would stumble after,
> Bewildered by my laughter.
> I should see the sun flashing—

but the voice has died away. What's the matter? A black cat, conscious of his power, has deserted his mistress, jumped on to the orange frock on the sofa. Take care, Mr. Winkie! You have a jealous mistress! Ah, the cozener knows his place after all. And as she reads on, all the gleaming surfaces of the distinguished room reflect the vitreous surface of the poetry. Colors and shapes of words, magic words. Colors and shapes of books, magic books. Colors and scents of roses, color of that sustaining love and understanding on the opposite sofa, warm as ripe fruit, that helped a restless driven creature to fix and crystallize this beauty she is torn by in the shimmer of a poetic pattern.

Eleven o'clock. The spell is broken. A maid with a ceremonial tray. Time for Ada Russell to go to bed. Time for the guest, sheltered in the hospitable comfort of the car, to steal away through the dark shrubbery, thinking of a poetess alone in the library of this great sleeping house, facing at last the stark reality of a great career, with a Mr. Winkie stealing in and out. Purr a little, Mr. Winkie, rub against her foot. For after all it is no secret that all the dear and solicitous friends in the world, all the hosts of the colleges, male and female, all the lectures and correspondence, the ice water and pillows and black cigars, the great house and American name cannot make a poet. They can help construct a celebrity. But poetry is the creation, as Amy Lowell said, of nerves and muscles, blood and sinews, heart and mind. How easy, if one is a-weary, to lie down on a big soft couch. But no. She sits in a chair, writing, writing through the night.

> The poem will not be denied, to refuse to write it would be a greater torture. It tears its way out of the brain, splintering and breaking its passage —And yet to have no poem to write is the worst state of all. Truly a poet's life is not a happy one. Broken and shattered when creating, miserable and void when not creating, urged always to a strain which cannot heal save through immense pain, peaceful only in the occasional consciousness of a tolerable achievement—certainly the poor creature must be born to his calling for no man would take on such an existence willingly.

"Urged always to a strain that cannot heal"—that explains Amy Lowell as truly as it does John Keats; explains the prodigious urge that forced a woman in most uncertain health to produce between the age of thirty-eight and fifty-one—in addition to a vast amount of "occasional" work—some eight volumes of verse besides the one just posthumously published and those to come; the two books of criticism; and the two-volume Keats biography to which she almost literally gave her life, by allowing her working nights to impinge more and more seriously on her sleeping days over a period of years. The report that she died of a heart broken by unfavorable English reviews must have caused a great stir in that corner of the poet's heaven where the fighting spirits assemble. Yet I can imagine Amy Lowell's saying—"So be it." Whatever the final verdict of erudition, the Keats will stand as humanly the most mellow fruit of her pen. Since she could not shelter Keats at Sevenels, tend him in his illness with the best nurses and doctors, straighten out his relation with Fanny (poor girl), nourish his loneliness and misery with a sympathy like that which made her own life fortunate and fruitful, she could at least die for poetry. This Lowell-Keats affair was a serious one which brought a proud woman closer than she had ever come to a life shorn of all the advantages she had drawn in the lottery of fate; and yet reaping greater rewards than hers, rewards she coveted. Had she lived, her own poetic currents would have deepened.

Her death is like the fall of a dynasty. Here endeth, perhaps, the great New England tradition, the essentially bookish tradition derived more from letters than from life, more from intellectual and social forces than from reality in the raw. The cultural influences of Amy Lowell's day were very much richer, freer and more complex than those which James Russell Lowell, Emerson and Longfellow knew. It was during the flush of her productivity that the wholesale invasion of America by foreign literary influences took place. Eclectic and intellectually curious and venturesome, she was in this international movement a pioneer, and any literary appraisal of her will take account of her connections both with the English Imagists and with

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such modern Frenchmen as Paul Fort, Jammes, de Gourmont. Her art, too, has been sensitive to the modern transfusion from the arts of music and painting, and to certain Renaissance-like forces born of the Great War. This gigantesque upheaval snapped the span of her life into two parts; and though her roots were so firmly planted in the traditional past, she took without seeming effort the stride of the age of Jazz. That is why the young loved her and never found her a prude. She could have shaken hands with Babbitt without winking, and he would have thought her, as all men did, a wonderfully good feller. Yet she was of the lineage of the bluestockings, and she may well be counted in the future with the literary ancestors she repudiated rather than with the new kind of New England poet, the child, probably of a Pole in the Connecticut valley, who will never have entered the Widener Library or heard a symphony concert.

My prayer is that she will find a biographer with as big a heart as her own, who will deal with her honestly, unsentimentally, discerningly, but not at all as Strachey dealt with Florence Nightingale or Nicolson with Byron. It would be very easy for some smart young person to puncture her soap bubble of fame. But whatever the verdict of posterity on her poetry, she was an outstanding force and influence in the American art of her time; and the really intriguing thing about the odd scheme of her existence is that *it worked*. Amy Lowell accomplished ten times as much in the last fifteen years of her life as the rest of us in a half century, and there was no conflict, I believe, between her aims and pursuits. This was due in a great measure to the unselfish seconding and the stimulus which Mrs. Russell brought. But one never found the poet harassed and grumbling because book collecting and lectures intruded upon composition: she had time and vitality for everything, her public career served her poetic fame, her fame served her lectures, her collecting served her scholarship. They were reversible parts of the same mechanism, and she was as much of an artist in the shifting of the gears as in the manipulation of words and poetic patterns. Had she been as unadapted to the world she lived in as John Keats and most of the other poets of like magnitude, she would have been a lesser personage, less mourned today through the length and breadth of America. So let us take her, with gratitude, for what she was. I think of her caustic, listening face as I saw it last at that table raised above the President of Harvard and other Boston notables at that great dinner given in her honor a few weeks before her sudden death. She was, on her dais, flanked largely by poets and editors: they signified to her mind, I am sure, the triumph of her personal achievement, the sway of the aristocracy of letters she had chosen to enter, over the aristocracy of birth and convention. That was perhaps her greatest triumph, the triumph over her origins. And then she read Lilacs: her "favorite poem":

Lilacs,
False blue,
White,
Purple,
Color of Lilac,
Your great puffs of bowers
Are everywhere in this my New England.——

Heart leaves of lilac all over New England
Roots of lilac under all the soil of New England
Lilac in me because I am New England,
Because my roots are in it,
Because my leaves are of it,
Because my flowers are for it,
Because it is my country
And I speak to it of itself
And sing of it with my own voice,
Since certainly it is mine.

ELIZABETH SHEPLEY SERGEANT.

(Editor's note: This is one of a series of articles in which Miss Sergeant is discussing interesting contemporary Americans.)

Liberia and Rubber

I STOOD in an Enchanted Forest at Christmas, 1923. On one side was a black man, United States Minister to Liberia. On the other hand was a white man representing the Firestone Tire and Rubber Company, which is today father of the Firestone Plantations Company and is about to invest one hundred million dollars in one million acres of rubber trees in Liberia. We all saw thin, straight, gray trees stretching endlessly about us and we all saw more than this. Minister Hood saw industry and revenue for Liberia for which he had worked faithfully for years. The expert saw a chance to challenge the rubber monopoly of England which today controls ninety-seven percent of raw rubber production. Something of both these things I saw; but I saw more than this. To me this hot, clean forest was enchanted with the past of this little land.

What is wrong with Liberia? It is significant that this is the form the question always takes in America. That there is something wrong is always assumed. Why? Liberia is not growing in size or population; it is not increasing remarkably in wealth; it wants to borrow money; it is not "developing." Now all citizens of the twentieth century assume that unless a nation is growing in numbers and annexing territory, and increasing the amount of private profits, it is decadent. Moreover in the present organization of world industry one can pretty easily separate countries by these criteria. Whereupon the query arises: are small,

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poor countries the victims of present conditions or are they evidences of inferior ability?

That Liberia is an "inferior" country is easy for America to believe for two reasons: first, it is ruled and inhabited by Negroes. Second, nearly all books and magazine articles say so. The first, of course, is not proof. And in the case of the second one must note that most of the books on Liberia have been written by people with an axe to grind: Englishmen who believe that Liberia is a natural adjunct to British Sierra Leone; Germans who wanted Liberia to piece out German West Africa; Frenchmen who realize that Monrovia could be made a better port than Dakar, a port nearer to America on the one hand and to French Equatorial Africa on the other. Finally, nearly all white writers who are "patriotic" know that a successful and independent Negro government in Africa would be the beginning of the end of European imperialism in Africa. Therefore Liberia must not be successful. It must not even be thought to have any possibilities of ultimate success under its present management.

Liberia was established at the beginning of the Industrial Revolution and just after the Napoleonic wars. It represented an attempt to transfer to Africa such of the American Negro problems as interfered with the growth of the Cotton Kingdom. The development of Liberia was coincident with the spread of the New World commerce during the nineteenth century and the rise of economic imperialism of Europe in Africa.

And yet Liberia is usually studied without the slightest reference to this economic background. She is looked upon as a self-steered craft, master of her own fate instead of being, as she has always been, a canoe tossed on raging economic currents which eddied out of the slave trade of the eighteenth century into the wild swirl of the World War in the twentieth century. Liberia began as neither country, colony or protectorate. She had to declare her independence because at that time nobody wanted her. Even England was expecting to cast off Sierra Leone with her other African interests after the death of the slave trade. England was, to be sure, warned even in these earlier days by imperialists like Lord Bathurst that her African interests were still valuable and that it was wrong to allow an independent Negro government in West Africa. But liberal England overpowered these arguments, recognizing the independence of Liberia and promising independence to Sierra Leone.

Gradually, however, the attitude of England and all Europe toward Africa changed and it was realized that black labor was valuable not only when forcibly transferred to new, rich land in the West, but when used in Africa itself to raise valuable raw material. Soon England, France and Germany closed in on little Liberia and an extraordinary series of events ensued.

An English illicit slave trader complained of Liberian interference and as a result England seized a large part of Liberian soil which she had formerly sold to Liberia and retained most of the purchase price as indemnity for interfering with English trade. Immediately France turned to the task and claimed the whole Liberian coast on the basis of treaties which she could not, or did not, produce. She finally compromised by taking one hundred miles of coast up to the Cavallo River; and both England and France drew the international boundary between their colonies and Liberia on the Liberian bank of the river as defined by the summer floods!

Liberia was neither invited to the conference of Berlin in 1885 nor were her just claims to the hinterland regarded. When she saw the pact sealed and England, France and Germany in full cry for her territory, she appealed "to all the civilized nations of the world . . . having been carried away into slavery and, by the blessing of God, returned from exile to our fatherland, are we now to be robbed of our rightful inheritance? Is there not to be a foot of land in Africa that the African, whether civilized or savage, can call his own?"

Liberia's appeal was not only unheeded but unheard and her fate would have been sealed long since but for international jealousies. All Europe wanted Liberia but no country was sure of America's claims and attitude. Liberia early realized this and acted accordingly. Talent in any nation great or small is limited: Liberia has produced for her size an unusual number of exceptional men. But their whole genius has been needed to defend the political integrity of their land. She catered to German trade and made Germany a watchdog against any foreign aggression in which Germany had no part. France and England were skilfully played off against each other and America was always a shadow in the background. As a result, despite the loss of more than half her original territory, Liberia still lives with forty-three thousand square miles of the richest territory on the west coast—well-watered, with fine forests, mountain, plateau and plain; with harbors and rivers.

But surely Liberia's troubles did not end with sheer physical defense—they began there. White imperialism today knows that conquest is only one method of domination. Economic onslaught with all its intricacies and propaganda is often much more profitable and it was that attack that Liberia had next to face and to face it only partially realizing its meaning and portent.

Liberia was and is "undeveloped." This is, of course, the severest charge that modern imperialism brings against a small independent country. To most folk it seems quite unanswerable. It connotes laziness, inefficiency, waste, inferiority. It was an excuse in the case of Liberia for wounding her sensibilities, insulting her and sneering at her. And yet "development" today means many things, from ordinary thrift and industry to being a cog in the

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great machine of world industry. Liberia is, for the most part, virgin, unexplored or half-explored forest; she has no railroads, she does not feed herself, she is to some extent living on borrowed funds —a "Croesus feeding on crusts." There is no doubt that the economic situation of Liberia is precarious but what is the reason for this?

The situation of Liberia is not simply a case of the difficulty of earning a living according to modern standards in a primitive world. To be sure she has a tropical climate to overcome, the scarcity of skilled labor, a problem of transportation and a problem of markets; but the trouble is that world public opinion today will not let a small country like Liberia which can furnish large quantities of palm oil, rubber, coffee, sugar, piassava and a dozen other world commodities, develop simply and slowly. They demand the production of these products quickly and cheaply and they assert the right to interfere if the products are not forthcoming. On the other hand of course this demand means a chance for a primitive country to get modern comforts more quickly than she could otherwise and thus from without and within she is forced into the turbulent currents of world commerce. Here is no particular problem of color or race; it is a world-wide problem of private profit backed by the irresistible power of great empires and the unanswerable propaganda of religion and newspapers.

Liberia began early to venture into world trade. Her first effort came at the time of the American Civil War when the isolation of Louisiana sugar plantations led to a large demand for sugar. Sugar plantations soon lined the St. Paul River and raw sugar was hurried across the waters in little sailing vessels which the Liberians built themselves. For ten years the trade went on. Liberia began to accumulate some wealth and confidence. A new college perched on the crowning heights of Cape Mesurado became a real centre of education. Monrovia, the capital, was laid out in broad streets and Liberia sang a new national hymn.

Then came economic changes sudden and wide, over which Liberia had no control. Louisiana began again to raise sugar cane. The beet sugar industry arose supported by bounties. The West Indian fields came more largely in competition and the sugar refiners came to control machinery, process and price. Steam carriers succeeded the sailing vessels. The raw sugar industry of Liberia declined and the only way for her to meet the new competition was to secure large capital for transportation and machinery.

In 1870 Liberia tried to borrow five hundred thousand dollars in London. She was allowed to fall into the hands of British loan sharks. "Then followed the system of charges, speculations and frauds unparalleled, I presume, in any public loan transactions of modern times," said President Roberts. Liberia actually realized from this loan about ninety thousand dollars and yet England demanded the payment of the five hundred thousand dollars with interest. For a generation Liberia protested, urging the unfairness and iniquity of this debt, while on the other hand England and the world held her failure to settle as proof of her shiftlessness and incapacity to govern and spread a propaganda against her which she has not lived down until this day. In sheer self-defense she was compelled to acknowledge the debt and to start paying it with accumulated back interest.

Failing in this effort to get foreign capital Liberia nevertheless struggled on; with her coffee of fine quality but competing with Brazilian and Java fields and without hulling machinery, skilled labor and railroads; palm oil and kernels were more successful but again lacked methods and machinery. Camwood had temporary importance, but was displaced by German synthetic dyes. Fibres like piassava sprang to favor and commanded high prices for a few years and then were killed by the monopolists of the coast-carrying trade who in a single season raised the freight charges five hundred percent.

The crisis came in 1908. Apparently matters had been improving. The annual customs revenue had increased from $237,000 in 1890 to $376,000 in 1908, and that year Liberia exported $900,000 worth of materials. If she could keep on the right side of the market and perhaps save a little home capital or find honest lenders abroad all would yet be well. But there was one sinister fact: Germany was displacing England in Liberian trade and in 1908 had 55 percent of the tonnage. England saw a menace to her supremacy. In 1904 and 1906, Sir Harry Johnston, the English colonial servant and writer, visited Liberia and published two sumptuous volumes on her resources. Various English companies sought large concessions and finally one in which Johnston was a director received the prize. This "Liberian Development Company" was an English concern financed with a capital of $500,000 borrowed on the credit of the Liberian government. The capital was to be used under English direction for roads, mines and rubber plantations. In a few years the company had built fifteen miles of dirt road at a cost of $163,882, planted a young rubber forest and failed miserably and completely and left Liberia with another vast debt.

Immediately the English government planned to foreclose. Probably England had come to a full understanding with France and possibly with Germany and she assumed that America was not interested. In 1908 the English Consul peremptorily notified Liberia that England did not consider the Liberian government "stable or effective." He demanded English control over the customs revenues, over a gunboat to be placed in the harbor and over a frontier force on land. Colonel Mackay-Mackay who had already been active both in Africa and England against Liberia was put at the head of the frontier force and immediately planned to foment mutiny in Monrovia and seize the government. But

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the Liberians rose to the occasion. They pacified the soldiers, forced Mackay-Mackay to resign and appealed to the American Negroes.

The appeal was shrewdly timed. Roosevelt was about to boost Taft into the Presidency and needed the colored vote. The Liberian commissioners appeared in America and Booker T. Washington sponsored them at the White House. The result was that an American Commission of white and colored men went to Africa and said, as all men have said, Liberia is a rich country, it has patriotic and willing people of good intelligence. There is no reason why with a chance this country should not develop as an independent self-supporting republic. Through this commission a third loan was engineered to refund and make easier the payment of previous loans and to enable Liberia again to bid for foreign capital.

It happened that this capital was attracted by the Enchanted Forest; for it was this forest of young rubber trees that the Liberian Development Company, fostered by the English, had started. If England had annexed Liberia this plantation would have been extended. As it was it stood there as a sort of gray and wistful failure until the Firestone expert looked upon it. Then began negotiations. The Firestone people at first proposed practically to take over the Liberian government; that is, they were going to furnish capital, buy land, control labor, develop the harbor, loan money to the government, etc. But Liberia balked. Her land could not be sold, but she was willing to make long leases; she declined to borrow money of the Firestone Company, but preferred to borrow in the open American market. She wanted to retain the power of labor legislation and to exercise the power of taxation. Negotiations went on for some time and were several times at the point of failing. Finally the Secretary of State of Liberia, Edwin Barclay, a shrewd and careful man, came to the United States and conferred with the Firestone Company and with bankers. Then the conclusion of the deal was announced. Just what its terms are is not known. Technically Liberia probably has won most of her points, but what difference does it make? Everything really depends upon the attitude of white capital in America. If they want to do a fine and unusual job in imperialism they have the opportunity here in Liberia. They can build up a local organization of control without a rigid color line; they can allow in Liberia decent and increasing wages; they can yield to the Liberian government satisfactory scope and revenue. This is possible, this is what Liberia and black America hope. On the other hand if the Firestone Plantations Company wishes it can repeat in Liberia all the hell that white imperialism has perpetrated heretofore in Africa and Asia. There is only one power that can in the slightest degree curb this and that is the black American with his vote.

W. E. Burghart DuBois.

Washington Notes

ONE of the gay little sidelights on politics in Washington these dark November days is the extraordinary number of Republican statesmen who meet on the street or in a club or at dinner and hopefully ask—"Don't you think Cal has begun to slip a little?"

What they mean is, has the President's popularity with the people begun to wane? and the answer of course is—not a bit. That another answer would be much more gratifying to those who ask the question is too apparent to be mistaken but the truth cannot be sacrificed to please them.

Every now and then some political traveler through the West and Mid-West drifts in here and brings the tidings that they are beginning to "get on" to Mr. Coolidge out that way. What he says is repeated in various House and Senate offices, relayed around the town and finally seeps into the Republican National Committee headquarters where it causes the true blue Massachusetts men there on guard to brood and glower and enter up another name on their secret black list. From there it is carried over to the White House executive offices where there is more brooding and glowering among the little group of insiders and an entry is made on the other black list kept over there. Finally at night up in the White House library the rumor, along with the author's name and all the little details, is repeated to Mr. Coolidge himself who as a brooder has few equals and as a glowerer is in a class practically by himself. The small suspicions which form a part of his New England nature feed on these reports. Whether they are good or bad they are the things in which he is primarily interested and he wants to hear about them even when the listening is a painful process and the news is of a sour and distasteful sort.

It would be interesting to write more of this peculiar and particular Presidential trait and taste and certainly a lot more could be written but the place for it is in a character sketch of Mr. Coolidge, which this is not, or in a real biography of him which I hope one day will be done—and not by Miss Ida Tarbell either. It is enough to say here that it is the real key to his character and I commend its study to those who would understand the man.

But to return to the rumors of waning prestige and diminishing popularity—they are at this time utterly and completely nonsensical and the suspicions, the broodings, the black lists and the apprehensions of the little Coolidge circle are wholly wasted—natural perhaps but unnecessary. I say natural because no one who pauses to reflect on the facts can fail to realize that any man with as admittedly a mediocre intellectual equipment as Mr. Coolidge—and no one save for propaganda purposes claims more than that for him—who through unforeseen and fortuitous combination of circumstances and an unprecedented national prosperity has been pushed to dizzy heights of popularity and acquired place, position and support far beyond rational bounds, could help feeling apprehensive about the duration of these things. It is bound to seem incredible to Mr. Coolidge that they should last—and of course he is ever on the outlook for signs that he has begun to slide.

That is, I repeat, natural but unnecessary at this time. He has not started to slip and they have not begun to "get on to him." And he will not and they will not as long as he keeps his newspaper support. That is the real secret. It is not only the Republican papers but practically all the

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others too—so-called Democratic, so-called Independent, and Hearst. If there is a single newspaper of influence, circulation and affluence, outside of the South, with the exception of the New York World—and I hate to except the World after the silly way in which it fell for the Omaha speech—if there is a single one not now supporting Mr. Coolidge and Mr. Mellon I cannot now think which it is. The papers I mean are the rich ones that roll up annual profits around the million mark. It is surprising how many there are that go away beyond that.

He has them all in that class now just as he had them all at the beginning of the last Congress, and for the same reason. Furthermore he will continue to have them all just as long as the same bait is used. Its appeal to the great money making newspaper is an irresistible one and the more they feed on it the more they want.

I think that over a year ago I pointed out in this place that the thing that first swung these great newspapers back of Mr. Coolidge in 1923 with a solidity that has not been shaken since was the original Mellon bill with its proposal to cut the surtax on the great incomes. In view of the overpowering propaganda now preceding the second Treasury attempt to make this cut and the energy and enthusiasm with which the argument is pushed that it is very much better for the man with the small income to have the tax of the man with the big income reduced rather than his own taken off, it will not be considered out of place or repetitious to point out once more this wholly obvious situation as to the newspapers, which would be plain as a pikestaff to the people as a whole but for the trifling fact that the only sources of information the people as a whole have are the newspapers. They are the sole channel through which facts flow to the masses.

Now these rich newspapers point out to the people various things about the administration tax reduction plan. They almost daily dwell upon the two stock arguments, both equally fallacious, first, that if the surtax on the great incomes is reduced much more money will be released for investment in business and second, that if the surtax is reduced those who escape taxes now by putting their money in tax-free securities will take it out and invest in taxable securities.

The thing the rich newspapers do not tell the people is that there are no institutions in the country that will more greatly or more directly benefit by the cut in the surtax than the newspapers—or to be specific the newspaper owners—it is the same thing. The owners and controllers of the great newspapers of the country are all rich men who have piled up great fortunes as a result of the enormous profits made by their newspapers and other enterprises in which they are interested. The appeal the plan to cut the surtax makes to these men is naturally strong.

The point I really want to make in all this is that these whispering Republicans who go around asking whether "Cal has started to slip" can find their answer in the analysis of the situation as herein set forth. No rich newspaper owned by rich men who want their taxes reduced—and that includes one hundred percent of them—can afford to waver in the enthusiasm and energy of their Coolidge support. To do so might diminish Mr. Coolidge's influence and that of course would diminish the chance of the surtax cut going through, and if it does not go through it will cost them in their individual capacity money not only in a considerable amount but money of the kind they most hate to give up—to wit, tax money.

So the big newspapers with this lure ahead of them will continue consistently and earnestly to support Mr. Coolidge and he will not start to slip while he has that—because they will not let him start.

And they will continue to harp upon those two stock surtax arguments, neither one of which is susceptible of proof and both of which shrink under the acid test.

Washington. T. R. B.

The Machine and Metaphysics

AT first thought there seems an insoluble difference between the machine and the tool. The tool is passive in the hand of the workman, and by that fact comes to express his will both intimately and directly. The tool is indeed an extension of the hand. The crude laborer has a crude tool and does crude work. The subtle craftsman becomes an artisan, an artist: the tool holds close to his nature and works his will in ways so immediate that the instinctive love attaching limb to mind goes over, consciously, into the brush, the knife, the hammer.

With the machine, this alchemy inspiriting a thing of wood or stone is gone. The machine is set in motion and achieves therewith a somewhat autonomous life. Moreover, the nature of this life does not depend upon the man who works it. Its qualities and its powers are fashioned for it and are inevitably determined, at a source to which the machinist has no access. An inventor, abstracted from his products, designs their future acts. The machines go forth. And the mechanic by a series of rote-behavior sets them going, runs them, stops them without for an instant coming into creative contact with the thing by which he lives. A crude man may work at a delicate machine. A blind or illiterate man may print a book: a man with no sense of texture or design may run a machine which manufactures lace or turns out decorations. And conversely, the delicate man—the creative man—can find no immediate channel for his will in running a machine. Whatever creativeness or delicacy it possesses has been ordained for it and is aloof. He can not swerve it from its stubborn independence. All he can do is care for it. Attendant, doctor, nurse—however you look at it, he is the slave of a creation which in its act and its idea remains beyond him.

Now all this is clear enough and from it philosophers deduce our woes, rightly—and wrongly our despair. If this state of things were final we might foresee man's downgoing in sterile servitude to a too exterior, too permanent grandeur. For indeed much of our common misery has sprung from man's loss of a tool which was his own and through which in myriad ways he did express himself. With the tool came beauty, because it was a subtly extended and yet obedient hand bringing between subject and object that harmony which is beauty's norm. With the tool came contentment, because by means of it the humblest worker put his seal on his craft; and came pride and those births of pride—morality and value—since the work of the tool was the man himself and so must be good and so must be regarded. Finally, with the tool came fulness: for that man alone is unified and full who has spent himself in self-expressive labor. And by contrast, the man is empty and disrupted who has been spent in labor which excludes his deep coöperation. So far, then, the pessimists of the machine are right. But here, their rightness ends. Could they look back upon what must have been the experience of man ere he mastered the tool, they might more sanguinely look forward.

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The primitive man, wielding an artefac, paddling a dug-out or making an instrument of a horse, had to undergo a profound psychological revolution ere this element in his hands, stone or wood or flesh, could become an extension of his personal will. He had to grow. How far he had to grow you can see symbolized for yourself by comparing your own hand with the paw of a dog. The step was inscrutably vast: so vast that once man made it, he dared not look back, and soon he forgot—and still he fights to forget. Who shall say what tragic ages went to the transition? to what insanities and despairs men plunged with the strange tool in their bewildered hands, with a wild horse beneath them? Surely, those unmastered weapons must have committed follies; must have broken the measure of men's life; must have inspired the wiseacres of that day to gloomy forecasts. We do not know the names of the Rousseaus of these desperate generations in which man's brain had not yet instinctively grasped the tool. But nothing is more certain than that they existed.

Now, with the machine, we are once more primitive. The tool is ours: we have tamed it and made it part of our dominion by a step in consciousness. Before the machine we are still barbarian or savage even like early man before a horse or a stone. Through a failure to make a certain further step in consciousness, before the machine we are still external.

Of course, there are differences. And it is precisely they which point to a new departure in man's life. If the machine were merely a more complex tool, there would not be this new element to our exciting day. The machine is a new part of nature: one which did not, like the stone or the horse, exist before. There is in the machine a marriage of what we call "the old elements" and what we call "the human." The domestic animal, in this sense, was a tool: its elements were outside of human nature. In dominating it, as with any other tool, we mastered a part of external nature. And this was comparatively simple, since in our use of the tool we did not come in conflict with any human will. But if we dominate the machine—make it part of ourselves—we shall have won control over a realm of nature which includes mankind; for man's will, other men's will are constant and determining factors of the machine. We shall have won a victory of consciousness not merely over the nature of the external world—but over our own nature.

The problem was one of consciousness in the days of the stone artefac; and it is again of consciousness today. It is a problem profound as human destiny, inscrutably complex. Yet I think the heart of it can be thus simply stated. The animal, so far as we can see, is incapable of the idea of any part of nature becoming part of itself. Man, with the tool, achieved this: fused unto himself the animal and the stone. Call the process what you may, this attitude of his toward portions of the physical world was metaphysical. And no savage could paddle a canoe without this metaphysical inheritance, made instinct.

We flounder before the machine and are features more or less groveling of its external life, because we lack an instinctive metaphysical consciousness to make us master and absorb it—to fuse the machine with all its elements of will and act into our own expression. Such consciousness, of course, must be evolved vastly beyond the childish metaphysics beneath the use of a tool. In the machine are adumbrated the will of the inventor, the will of the owner, the will of many workers, the will, indeed, of an age and of a world. Only when the individual worker experiences that these wills are not alien to him; that these elements of life contained in the machine fuse, in a higher synthesis, together with his own, into a unitary act—alone then will his spirit in participation be able to go out through the machine, so that it and the whole mechanized world may once again, in his joy, in his beauty, in his human pride, express him.

But such a mechanic would possess the consciousness of a Spinoza? No less! No less is needed, in order that the human world may not go down before this new Nature—the free-spawning mechanical invention. The modern machine converges with the wisdom of the ages to force man ahead. From India, from Judea, from Greece, from Germany, has come the single canon: that life is unitary, that experience is One, and that the human consciousness in one form or another must know and be this One. The machine will compel us, at this human crisis, to experience what heretofore great men have merely known. The machine again makes metaphysics man's most practical engagement.

WALDO FRANK.

At the Ritz and the Guild

The Man with a Load of Mischief, by Ashley Dukes. Ritz Theatre, October 26, 1925.

The Glass Slipper, by Ferenc Molnar. The Guild Theatre, October 19, 1925.

IF we say that the important content of Mr. Geddes's production of Arabesque is expressed through the visual medium and can be understood only by seeing it, we may as truthfully say that The Man with a Load of Mischief rests its matter in the writing of it, so that only by exact quotation, and of the whole play very nearly, can we convey its quality. We must read the play in the Doran edition or must have gone to the Ritz Theatre and, despite the acting, have listened to the words themselves, if we are to get this delicate and secure comedy, with all its witty fragrance and luminous scale.

"How many gravestones have I passed today—" the Nobleman says to his man at the inn, while he awaits the Lady who has fled from her protector the Prince and whom he has followed from Bath and intends to restore to her patron and so win the royal favor, "and each of them the grave of an hour lost in traveling! How many crazy loads of hay, and rosy farmers in their market carts, and great full-bellied cornstacks, and feathered elms like striding cockerels! I was sick of meadowsweets and buttercups, I was surfeited with rich acres. The world is very coarse: Nature disgusts me. And yet our poets sing of her! This strapping wench, this milkmaid of a goddess, all breasts and fruition!"

"A world of appearances," says my lord—"a painted mockery," the Man says in his soliloquy. "Brave men, gay women—these are masks and shadows. Green trees, young shoots, high nests for crows—whispers, fancies."

The Lady and the Nobleman sit at dinner. Perhaps, she declares, he is not a believer in the goodness of human nature.

"Perhaps, madam," he replies, "you have heard of the Renaissance? I would not weary you, but it may be the name has met your ears."

Lady: Do you mean the revival of learning?

Nobleman: The revival of ignorance, madam. The return of black superstition.

Lady: But one has always supposed——

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Nobleman: The grand discovery of the Renaissance —if we are to call it a discovery—was the goodness of man. The prime delusion. The new Serpent in Eden. Since that sop was thrown to man's conceit, the creature has strutted in his garden like a peacock on holiday. Whatever may be wrong, he is right. Whatever may be bad, he is good. He has spread a tail of fine feathers that he calls his humanity, and grows insufferable. Order went out of the world when the thought of human goodness came into it.

But no, these quotations will not serve either. They give the effect of longeurs and of making points and the secret of The Man with a Load of Mischief lies in its diffusion and equality of parts. There are a few lapses, as for instance in the scene between the Man and the Maid before she goes to the Nobleman's chamber, but these are brief indeed. The quality of this whole play derives from a certain lambent matrix of philosophy, a controlled and flexible background, an evenness of taste among many kinds of content and many moods. It is not passionately poetic nor brilliantly cynical nor smartly risqué, not clever and bristling with epigrams or crackling with smart situations, not literary, not flying shrewdly on the wings of our traditional comedy of manners. It has something of all these but all fluently distributed, all kept in one picture and easily possessed, so that when the sum of the play is taken it speaks in its own terms. The Man with a Load of Mischief restores to our theatre as no comedy in years has done that sense of language and a certain crisp poetry and distinction of character drawing that our comedy once had but lost long ago. It is a play that makes neither academic nor lofty pretensions, but is what it is. It has the pleasant ease of culture and a very patent foreknowledge of popular appeal. And what it shines by most is the pervasion of all its parts, so diverse in kind, with tact and sincerity.

The Man with a Load of Mischief brings up all over again, as must happen when anything but a realistic piece of common life is tried on Broadway, the question of the extent to which we may demand that a play be actor proof. That question there is no way of deciding. Plainly there are dramas that can more or less achieve their effects whether the actors in them are good or bad, that can almost be divorced from their agents, just as there are some songs which get their effect more or less apart from the singing of them and others whose musical idea cannot appear until it is understood by the singer. Nobody would say that a piece of music should be sound proof or that the brain supply its own padded cell. The three chief rôles in Mr. Dukes's play imply a delicate but very heavy burden on the actors. Miss Ruth Chatterton and Mr. Ralph Forbes did not understand the mere quality or meaning of their parts, and hence of the play itself, though Mr. Forbes may have been naturally fitted to do so and might perhaps have been turned by inspired directing into a wise piece of casting. Mr. Robert Lorraine, though he slurred many points and overplayed others, had the advantage of a safe stage tradition—the cynical nobleman with a mind—to guide him and played agreeably. But for the most part the play had to act the players.

If the English comedy preserves through all its elusive variety a fine tact and sincerity, Molnar's Glass Slipper at the Guild Theatre has neither.

You sit through the first act of The Glass Slipper moved and expectant. You can see the Molnar tricks but you feel at the same time his ingenuity, his poetic warmth of feeling and sympathy and his facility of emotion. The young girl of nineteen, the slavey in a boarding-house, hungers for the man of forty-eight, the star boarder, supported by the landlady, who is his mistress. There are raw details, longings, lovely childish dreams; and these in the hands of Miss June Walker promise to be one of the beautiful things of the season. She is rapturous, gawky, mordant, pitiful. She makes no evasions, spares nothing, she breaks the little heart of life that the girl is; she is untouched by sordidness and filth, she is the pain and beauty of opening life.

For the rest of the play Miss Walker is sincere always but cannot find out where she is. Is the girl out of Wedekind, Barrie, Cinderella, all of them, or what? By the end of the second act you are obliged to think that she is a raving neurotic, pathetic because young if you like, and that you are to get your entertainment out of the torture of an abnormal adolescent, for the play has turned into the landlady's semi-comic wedding, poorly done on the stage, and the man the girl raves about has looked from the start to be sixty instead of forty-eight. The last act is at the headquarters of the police. The girl in her despair has tried to become a prostitute, and these people are summoned as the responsible parties in her ruin. There is a cocotte, there are the madam of the redlight house and other lurid sketches. The play as we get it has sunk to raw farce, not well done and in poor taste indeed; and we are left to try and put together the sum of its elements, sometimes beautiful, sometimes tragic, sometimes burlesque and sometimes merely vulgar, and to reflect that you may take the most terrible, literal or poignant details from life and turn them, alongside with the raucous and funny, into whatever sort of entertainment you please, fantasy, comic or even, if you insist, the crass, so long as you, first, as a human being realize what they cost in human living, and second, as an artist, unify the mass of them into one organic whole, fish, flesh or fowl, give them one key.

STARK YOUNG.

A Letter to the International Film Art Guild

GENTLEMEN: You were quite right in assuming that I would be interested in your project, and that, as a writer about the movies, I would be happy to assist you. Your program is a general one. You propose to arrange showings, one night a week, I believe, and for comparatively small audiences, of films which otherwise would be forgotten or entirely unshown. There is, as you know, a Film Guild in England, with Wells and Shaw as the most notable sponsors, which has a similar object; and as you are international, you will probably work with foreign organizations and bring us pictures which, whether popular or unpopular abroad, are destined to be locked in some distributor's safe in America.

It happens that I cannot think of the movie except as a popular art or form of entertainment. What you offer, therefore, seems to me most important as a means for making good films more popular. Just as our small theatres have encouraged new dramatists, and given a field for experimental stage-craft, you may prosper inventiveness and imagination in the movies—two qualities they now sadly lack, or are only beginning to develop. You will build up an audience and this audience, eventually making itself felt at the box-office, will bring interesting films to the big and to the neighborhood houses. Gradually the patrons of the

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movies will be able to see what you now see; eventually, you may hope, these patrons will recover from the somnolence which years of inferior movies have lulled them into. At the same time there will be new things coming up, and you will continually keep ahead, so that the movie may not degenerate.

All this is to the good; but it would hardly explain why, when you asked me to suggest a list of ten pictures which I feel ought to be shown, I sent you such a mixture of sacred and profane. To the æsthete, Caligari and The Last Laugh are sacred; possibly Cabiria also. But why, next to these and two early Griffith films, should I have suggested three Chaplin pictures, two Keystone comedies, and, worst of all, "any good old serial" and "a western?" The old serials and westerns were nearly all badly photographed; the pictorial beauty in them, the sense of form, the whole plastic value, are nearly nil; the subjects are trivial enough. Why place them side by side with the few works of actual imagination which we possess? Why not rather have made room for the "artistic" Salvation Hunters and Shattered?

The reason is that if you only keep alive the unpopular and artistic film, you will do less than half your work; I think you will even defeat your ends, unless your ends are purely arty. I suggest these pictures, and could suggest a hundred others, because what is wanted now, desperately, is to keep alive the *popular* film. The film which runs its week or two on Broadway, on Market street, at Graumann's, or in the Loop, has its little life. If you are some sort of determinist and think that the owners of movie houses are coerced by popular demand, you may assume that these films stay alive until all the people who want to, have seen them. Even so. Within three years you have a new group of patrons; and within five years the good films enrich themselves in memory, so that they can be revisited and old pleasures renewed. It is the blessing of the film that a revival means only unlocking a deposit vault; the risk is not comparable to the risk of a stage revival. And the virtue of these revivals is that they could undercut the popularity of bad new films while the good new ones would only profit by the comparison.

I am aware that only a very few films have been successfully revived. I saw Cabiria announced about three years ago; at the Capitol in New York I saw The Birth of a Nation, perhaps four years ago. Fitfully the old Chaplin comedies appear at out of the way houses. A friend of mine who wanted to arrange a private showing of Caligari found that there was not a single print of that picture in America; it had lain idle for so long that it was returned to the European owner. But that is precisely where your work can be most effective. While you are creating an audience for new and unpopular things, try to create one also for the old and the popular. Keep the movies all alive.

It would not be a bad thing to do this merely from historical interest. If you are convinced that the movie is an art (without that conviction most of your work will be sterile) think how remarkable your opportunity is to be aware perhaps for the first time in history, of every movement in the development of an art. The cinema museums preserve in their field all that is lost in the older arts. And just as secrets have been lost, processes died out, in the graphic arts; just as we have only to wonder what the music of the Greeks actually was; so we are likely to lose sight of elements in craftsmanship and technique if we do not continually observe the old movies. Because in addition to being an art, the movie is our great American toy and has to show something novel and tricky every week. And as soon as one trick is developed, the old one is taboo. Even if behind the old trick there was dexterity of handling, neatness, perhaps a strain of artistic propriety.

I put these things hypothetically although I am myself convinced that the best corrective to the display and dulness of most of our new movies is to be found in the simplicity and energy of the old. There is a refreshing movement toward resuscitation of the old type of movies; the western discloses itself in the "epics" and "sagas" of the pioneer days; who knows? perhaps we shall have a thriller presently masquerading as a problem play. The Phantom of the Opera advertised an opulence not quite in keeping with the thrillers of the old days, but essentially it was one. The natural course of development is to use the old material with the new intelligence we have of ways of making films, and adapting them to the possibly greater intelligence of the new movie audiences. This development can be made surer, and the field of available material can be substantially broadened, if we continually go back and see what the old pictures did and how they did them.

Chiefly I think the old movies will help the new ones by indicating the superior suitability to the movies of certain types of stories, and by pointing out the greatest of all chances which the movie passed up—I mean the chance of creating a type of playing which shall not be acting and shall be as linked with the mechanism and the limitations of the camera and screen as ordinary acting is linked with the mechanics and limitations of the stage. A type of playing dissociated entirely from the spoken word and from the gesture which accompanies the spoken word was beginning to develop. You see it frequently in the serial picture where everything is related, or grows from, the exaggerated activity of the story, an activity which the screen supremely records. I have noticed that in recent pictures the bane of the close-up is not so fearful; in another dozen years we shall see it properly used. To assure ourselves that Mr. Griffith's discovery (he claims it, I believe) is not necessary to the film, let us look at the early ones in which it does not occur. To get rid of stereotyped gestures (imitated from the stage in too many cases) let us look at the films when the gestures were awkward, but self-developed.

In my list I have included two spectacular pictures, and in this category there are others, of more recent date, which might be substituted. In the hands of a few directors the spectacle has developed nobly; in others it has become an extravagant bore. I put the old ones in because they are good in themselves and because the spectacle is a good thing in the movies. I have added an old psychological film. Do not smile; The Avenging Conscience is one in a simple way; and in the hope that Mr. Griffith may attend your evenings, I put it in for him to see, as a mute request for him to consider whether he might not do it or a similar picture again. Conscience, like everything else in the movies, must be made visible; here is the proof that there was a time when it seemed possible to do this, in America, in the early days.

The reasons for putting in the Chaplin pictures are obvious; I have added two of my favorite Keystones because they are good and because the comic line seems always to have something to teach its more serious parallel. And for lack of places I have omitted extremely important films. Some drawn comics ought to be preserved (you might even find a Krazy Kat from Herriman's own hand); and some news reels; and any quantity of trick photography. The elements in the films which are fruitful are the ones to cherish; and the artistic movies are only a small portion of these.

GILBERT SELDES.

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You Look and I'll Read

Discursions on Travel, Art and Life, by Osbert Sitwell. New York: George H. Doran Company. 310 pages. $6.

Along the Road, by Aldous Huxley. New York: George H. Doran Company. 266 pages. $2.

THE fact is," says Aldous Huxley, "the fact is that very few travelers really like traveling. . . . I have seen much brighter faces at a funeral than in the Piazza of St. Mark's. . . . People travel for the same reason as they collect works of art: because the best people do it."

So much for the majority of us. But there are a few genuine travelers, of whom Aldous Huxley is one, who really enjoy it. For him, it is a "besetting vice." He travels indiscriminately, greedily, "loving what is unfamiliar for the sake of its unfamiliarity," finding boredom "rather agreeable than painful." And the result, in this book of Notes and Essays, is seldom boring, nearly always lively, occasionally beautiful. To travel with Aldous Huxley is to be in the company of a tourist who does not know what he wants, nor cares, who does not affix to art its usual capital A, who is quite as interested in the Alfa Romeo taking hairpin turns at fifty miles an hour, in the table at the Hotel Storione at Padua reserved especially for Italian millionaires, as in the more serious business of churches and paintings. Indeed nothing is very serious business for him, and one regrets at times a will to be humorous, a falling back upon lying innkeepers and other ancient properties which betray the professional seeking for copy. But though as a writer he may occasionally be too professional, as a traveler he retains his amateur standing.

And other travelers as incurable as he will find pleasure in retracing his steps in print. The pleasure is double: that of vicarious touring and that of looking forward to seeing the things and places he has seen with Along the Road as a guide book. One wishes Aldous Huxley would write a guide book. It would not be on the main track. And it would guide without imposing on us any double-starred sense of duty.

Mr. Sitwell is nearer the guide-book tradition, though he would be the last to admit anything so stuffy. He too travels easily, turns aside often, runs down the inaccessible, the unknown, follows the whim of the moment. But his detailed, and often very vivid, descriptions of buildings and places, lovely as some of them are, envious as we are of his having been there without us, give us the same school-child feeling as the government guide in a museum, or the precise solemnities of Baedeker. Look at this, look at it carefully, its history is so-and-so, it is remarkable for its proportions, it is unique in color, and now, before we pass on to the next church, remember never to forget this one. . . . Mr. Sitwell does not talk like this, but he does manage to make us ashamed of not paying strict attention to the left hand side of the facade. As our eye wanders, we feel the weight of his disapproval. For he appreciates "the importance of Art over all other things," and this is a terrifying virtue.

It is curious, even in a book so good as Mr. Sitwell's, so exuberantly accurate, so lovingly restrained, so often imaginative, and lit by the rays of a slanting poetry, how all his carefully written pages of description fall flat before a photograph. And his book abounds in quite remarkable photographs. One cannot stare indefinitely at a page of even the handsomest prose. The words come out of their frames and wander meaninglessly into neighboring sentences. But one can stare at a photograph, and drink in, from its mechanical pattern of light and shade, a feeling for distant unfamiliar places which goes beyond words, which makes words unnecessary, even a little impertinent. Particularly when, as in Mr. Sitwell's case, the adjectives swell to "wonderful," "enchanting," "delightful," "unusual," or hunt in couples, like Paris policemen, for mutual protection.

Yet the photograph, like the place itself, is in some way less satisfying than words about it, particularly other people's words. Before a grand old church, a fine piazza, we are troubled at the extent of our feelings, but even more at their unintelligibility. We turn a corner in Italy, and there stands, for instance, the famous campanile we have come so many miles to see. And what do we see? A campanile? Not exactly. We see a campanile, plus all the things, memories, prejudices, colored spectacles of one kind or another we have brought with us as aids to a completer vision. For all in a second there crowd up before our eyes, both to blur and sharpen them, a certain amount of history, some fragments of information from a guide-book, many interwoven strands of criticism, what this expert says, what our friend at the hotel told us to expect, what we expected ourselves, what we hoped we would see, and what we thought we ought to see. If the campanile, through our utter ignorance, happens to be totally unknown to us; if, as we turned the corner, we suddenly came upon what seemed an important and beautiful discovery, then our eyes and mind swim, not only with the campanile, but with unanswered questions, resolutions to look it up, surmises as to whether it is as famous as it ought to be, desires to go right back to the hotel and tell the rest of the party about it, fears that they knew all about it long ago. Whether our eye be fresh or crowded, in either case the first glimpse of the campanile is likely to bury it in a cloud of subjectivity, which requires long and sometimes painful digging away, exhaustive researches, visits and revisits, and finally a putting of the mass of impressions upon paper. The process of writing about the campanile will further transmute our impression of it, forcing clarity out of chaos, arranging mental clouds into an orderly sky moving to the north-west. What came to us in a tangled flash will be laid out in cold words, end to end like shingles, forming in the end a decent roof to shelter our confused emotions. And once this has been done, we will believe in the roof rather than the emotions.

People want to be told what to think and feel. This is especially true of the things they feel and think in foreign countries. Not that they lack thoughts and feelings of their own, but in a confused natural state these impressions lie indigestibly upon the soul. Hence the great demand for predigested Europe, predigested art, travel, information, criticism. The craft of talking even to oneself about unfamiliar sights and places is a difficult one, and its products are eagerly sought after by those who are incapable of acquiring it. In other words, the craft of seeing things for oneself, which must at one time have been fairly common, is passing into the hands of a few. The few write, the many read.

In proof of which I offer the following true story. The incident was witnessed in Paris by a friend of mine whose word I have no reason to doubt. Two Americans were sitting rather wearily in the Louvre, with pictures on every wall about them. One of them had a Baedeker, the other did not. "See here," said the one who had the Baedeker to the one who did not, "See here, you look and I'll read. We've got to get some system into this."

ROBERT LITTELL.

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History and Social Science

The New History and the Social Sciences, by Harry Elmer Barnes. New York: The Century Company. 605 pages. $4.

PROFESSOR Harry Elmer Barnes has produced another book of immense and many-branched learning. It would be difficult to find a more exhaustive reference book than this volume, entitled The New History and the Social Studies, for discovering the contributions of geography, psychology, anthropology, sociology and like studies to the understanding of history, and the reciprocal contributions of the better historians. It is a book of wide prospects and long vistas; there is a dizzy satisfaction in noticing with what confidence Professor Barnes traces an apostolic succession from Aristotle to Trotter, touches us on the shoulder to indicate Lucretius as a forerunner of Stanley Hall, bases conclusions on the study of recorded history from "the tenth century . . . unknown authors of the Jahvistic sources of the Old Testament and the Greek logographoi" to the present day, or bids us correct a judgment here or there by a study of "pre-literary history." Our brain reels as we turn over page after page of the hagiography of those blessed ones, with "competent" and "enlightened" prefixed to their canonized names, who have helped to spread the true history, although we are occasionally surprised by significant omissions such as that of Fueter's name (included elsewhere as a "synthetic historian") from the list of historians of history.

Professor Barnes's book will be sweet in the mouth, for it is exhilarating to learn that we may look forward to "a future of progress and improvement, such as we of the present have but the slightest comprehension," lying beyond the present "supreme height of civilization" as yet reached; and the bristling words "unmistakably" and "beyond contradiction," protecting approved theories, have a cheerful look. However, it will prove bitter in the belly, and it is to be feared that we shall spend many a restless night dreaming about these serried ranks of learned men who march past us, each with his thoughtful volume. But we shall employ busy mornings, those of us who are cursed with that boxed memory, a card-index, copying on to our little cards the tabulated information with which Professor Barnes has so generously supplied us. And then, having thus disburthened ourselves, we shall forget this haunting nightmare of a world dyspeptic with books, and all will doubtless be well again.

The New History is very new. And yet, although Professor Barnes informs us that he believes in birth-control, it seems that the New History does not. This volume contains a vision of its seed as destined to inherit the whole earth of learning, "the sum total of human achievement," "the whole story of the human past"; "manners, customs, institutions and ideals" are its province; "to emphasize and clarify those forces which have made a people great as a nation" is its aim; and "collective psychology" is among the most approved of its methods. The peril of the new is that it becomes speedily démodé, and we confess to apprehension, not for the gaiety but for the reliability of history, when the Freudian psychology "will be regarded as a tool of the historian which is as indispensable to his success as Giry's Manual on Diplomatic" is today.

But Professor Barnes is right. We cannot force the pace of the sciences so as to hurry, like Haeckel, to conclusions useful in a synthesis, and drop the needed piece into the vacant space of the jig-saw puzzle of learning. But departmentalism and the anæmia which comes of too much inbreeding among students are a real danger. Professor Barnes has seen the need for coördination, if politics, in the ancient broader sense, or the other social sciences are to grow to their full strength. The encyclopædic age must follow the analytic. That is doubtless why he has here supplied us with a Who's Who wherein every student can discover those who are or were doing work akin to his own.

This book, moreover, gives yet again an expression of Professor Barnes's belief in the connection of learning with the living interests of contemporary man, in the discovery by every age anew of what subjects are important to the life of that age, and in the possibility of sifting out the major factors determinant in the life of peoples from the higher gossip of historians. The "new historians" will not be hewers of wood for the conquering hosts of social scientists, but they will be intelligent coöperators in the sense desiderated by Mr. Collingwood in his suggestive Speculum Mentis, with an eye for the relative importance of details.

The period of history which explained all by the school-boy's "important battle," or disdained to explain at all, is dead. We are approaching the end of the age of which it was the naive belief that the only determinant of political events is the type of incident popularly labelled "political," and that no inquiry is demanded into the economic, climatic, and racial backgrounds of peoples, and the physical and psychological circumstances of individuals. This attitude is sometimes kept alive by the pretence of pursuing "knowledge for its own sake" apart from a sense of direction, a Gargantuan appetite for details divorced from assignable significance.

Perhaps owing to the individualistic and free-will philosophy then dominant, it is true, as Professor Barnes elsewhere says, that "the vast majority of normal and usual historical works in the last century, while primarily devoted to matters falling within the political, including the military and diplomatic, realm, so faithfully followed the anecdotal or episodical technique that either the events and activities narrated had little or no relation to political evolution, or such relation was in no way clear." Against this frivolity of savants the author of this book, with his championship of the high seriousness of history, is a constant and needed protestant.

GEORGE E. G. CATLIN.

A Professor on the Sidelines

Playwrights of the New American Theatre, by Thomas H. Dickinson. New York: The Macmillan Company. 331 pages. $2.50.

THE book, I am happy to say, is not so bad as the title which suggests a series of heart-to-heart talks delivered to the associated women's clubs of Rotaria, but even with due allowance the title points to the central weakness of the book. There are theatres in America and there are plays, but where are we to find the abstracted entity to which Professor Dickinson applies that appallingly pompous, self-important epithet, "the new American theatre?"

The amusing thing is that Professor Dickinson doesn't find the new American theatre himself. Like the rest of us he perceives that there is an uncommon amount of activity in the theatres; ergo he must write a book. All he does is to tell us a little in a heterogeneous way about that activity. After his first two chapters, rather long essays on Percy MacKaye and Eugene O'Neill, the book degenerates into a catalogued digest of the last ten or fifteen year-books

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of the theatre. Professor Dickinson mentions hundreds of plays and scores of authors. Each chapter is much divided, and each division discusses a multiplicity of plays. On one occasion he fills two pages with the names of one-act plays and their authors. His favorite device is to give summaries of plays, summaries sometimes interesting and sometimes reading as if they had been copied verbatim from the good professor's notebooks. These summaries are superfluous if the reader has seen the plays, and one wonders how far they help the reader if he has not.

The essay on MacKaye, by all odds the best thing in the book, is discriminating and fair, that is to say harsh. By contrast the essay on O'Neill falls with a thud. For one thing O'Neill 's work is refractory, lending itself but poorly to any scholar's treatment. For the purposes of his book Mr. Dickinson must explain O'Neill, judge him, tell us his significance in the development of the drama, and O'Neill can not be explained, judged, or placed as easily as MacKaye.

I have said enough, perhaps, to illustrate the earlier remark that Professor Dickinson has perceived that some unusual plays are being written and produced and has therefore, inasmuch as he has a professional interest of a sort in the theatre, been moved to write a book. He has set for himself the ambitious aim of telling us all about the new American theatre. Always given to sounding an eschatological note, he has again raised the cry, "Repent, for the American drama is at hand." Professor Dickinson has his virtues, of course, and one would not deny them. He eschews the heavy-handedness of the academic classicist, and he is cursed neither with formulæ nor with bugbears. He is, in brief, an honorable, an intelligent gentleman, with a brooding, tender passion for the future of the American drama and an unconquerable weakness for talking about it.

In so far as Dickinson is trying to tell us that the last few years have witnessed an amazing life in the playhouses there can be no quarrel with him, unless it is because he is talking commonplaces. Most of us have stood around on tiptoe as good play followed good play—there need be no cavilling about what a good play is, for by almost any standard each year for the last ten has witnessed more good plays than the preceding year. A good play or two may happen any old time, but good play will not follow good play unless at least three factors exist: people who can write good plays, people who will produce good plays, and people who will go to see good plays. The precise relation of hen and egg we will leave to the academicians. It is easier and wiser to take all three factors together, and it seems clear that ten years ago none of them was noticeably present, that six years ago they were appearing above the horizon, and that now they are all in evidence.

As his title forewarns us, Professor Dickinson pays little attention to anything but the writing of plays, and his book suffers by consequence. We owe the development of the past few years quite as much to the appearance of discriminating and venturesome producers as to the rise of promising playwrights. Anyone who enjoys resultless pondering might meditate for some little time on the presumable fate of Eugene O'Neill if his progress had not been coincident with the advent of the Provincetown Players, the Theatre Guild, and other experimental groups. I can think of only one outstanding play of the past season, e. g., What Price Glory, that does not owe its production to an organization which is not commercial in the ordinary sense of the word, and the same is true, by the way, of the notable revivals, without even the single exception.

All this Mr. Dickinson seems to realize dimly, but he gives these facts little place in his book. He seems even more oblivious to the importance of the audience. Boston, where the reviewer has lived for the past decade, is a star witness for the blight that results when there is no audience for plays of merit, but any city in the country, save only New York, would do quite as well. Dickinson devotes many pages to the drama of sections, but what he describes are plays about various geographical districts written for New York audiences. The Carolina Playmakers and one or two other groups have developed appreciative audiences outside New York, and incidentally have opened the way for a true sectional drama, plays written about sections by and for people of those sections, but for the most part our sectional drama is as truly sectional as the plays that once amused London were truly American. Until there are audiences for good plays in all the larger cities a bona fide sectional drama will be impossible, and, which is more important, there will be something exotic in all our dramatic growth.

GRANVILLE HICKS.

Ideas and Fiction

Christina Alberta's Father, by H. G. Wells. New York: The Macmillan Company. $2.50.

The Odyssey of a Nice Girl, by Ruth Suckow. New York: Alfred A. Knopf. $2.50.

Faber, by Jacob Wassermann. New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company. $2.50.

MR. WELLS is on the whole the most skilful craftsman in English in the form known as the novel of ideas, as is Mr. Shaw in the drama of similar import. They are the successors of the Victorians in their use of literature for propaganda; their difference from their predecessors consists in the novelty of their thought, to which they call attention by liberal use of paradox, and in their superior faculty as entertainers. Mr. Wells has dealt in fiction with the same themes which he has expounded in his tracts of sociology. His first novels were comedies of class characteristics and distinctions, Kipps, Mr. Polly, Tono Bungay. Then came his preoccupation with sex relations, which was responsible for Ann Veronica, The New Machiavelli and the whole series of novels which followed. The Research Magnificent introduced the theme of discipline, individual preparedness, education. The thesis of Christina Alberta's Father was familiar twenty years ago to readers of A Modern Utopia and First and Last Things. It is that humanity finds its essential quality as a succession of births, by virtue of which the stream of the race flows on continuously, to what purpose we know not. The highest conception of the individual is his consciousness of his part in this racial current, and his chief function is to contribute to it generously. This idea is the largest which has ever occurred to Mr. Wells. It puts Christina Alberta's Father on a higher plane than its predecessors, except The Research Magnificent. The story which carries and symbolizes the thesis is amusingly possible; the comedy of lower middle class manners is skilfully used in contrast to the swelling imperial theme; the fertility of characterization, the liveliness of the action, the volubility of speech, the vivacity of the whole performance in short are undeniable. If Christina Alberta's Father is not among the most important fiction of the season it is because its type is out-of-date, and we are living in 1925 instead of 1905.

Miss Suckow's novel might be described as an illustra-

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tion of Mr. Wells's thesis, but it should be added that in this respect as in every other the author shows complete reserve. Neither in her own person nor in that of any character does she thrust comment or synthesis upon the reader. Nevertheless through the succession of little happenings, and the interaction of simple characters, there gathers the feeling for life as a whole which may not inaptly be phrased in Mr. Wells's terms. And this sense of a wholeness, somehow, somewhere to be apprehended, gives to Miss Suckow's second novel an emphasis lacking in her first.

An emphasis, again it must be insisted, inherent in the material itself in its mass, revealed through the steady accumulation of detail. Every phase of Marjorie Schoessel's girlhood and youth, in Iowa and in Boston, is developed through the trivial events and contacts of her experience. The thoroughness with which this is done is rather appalling, but the narrative is sustained by the absolute evenness of its flow and its uniformly clean, firm style. The sureness of the technique gives a certain distinction to the most commonplace matter. Miss Suckow is the most imperturbable of youthful novelists. If she should betray, by a single sentence, hesitation, uncertainty, doubt whether she holds her readers with the same grip as she does her characters, her control would be gone forever. But Miss Suckow drives serenely ahead with a confidence that begets faith.

Miss Suckow's confidence in her facts is exhibited in her willingness to let them speak for themselves. Her method is that of the older realists, absolutely objective. Marjorie is not an introspective person, and her stream of consciousness for the most part merely reflects the world about her. She has, it is true, to solve the central problem of her generation, that of freedom. As an individual she is pressed upon by the small town society of Buena Vista, by school, above all by her family. It is here that the chronicle goes deepest into human life, that life of the race which expresses itself in affections and loyalties which lie deeper than individual desires. Marjorie is not a heroine of renunciation. She does not rationalize her sacrifice; she yields because the demand is compelling. Her sense of futility and frustration is relieved by the sense of the homely beauty in things of use and wont, by the content that comes with the following of old ways among familiar faces. The commonplace countenance of Main Street in the little Iowa town takes on a certain beauty never described, for Miss Suckow is always impartial, but felt. Marjorie, however, never gives up what is deepest in herself. "Under all the twistings and haltings of her career, the selfishness, the ironic absurdities, she knew that there had been one thing after all—the need to satisfy the craving for something that was deep and beautiful and beyond what people called 'everyday things.'"

Marjorie's world is for the most part limited to girls and women. Her associations with boys are singularly slight and without meaning; with men practically non-existent. If it be urged that no girl today lives a life so untroubled by curiosity and desire, the answer is in the title: Marjorie is a nice girl. In thus defining her heroine Miss Suckow has given a double exhibition of that restraint which is her chief strength. In the first place she remains on ground which she knows thoroughly foot by foot. Besides this, she keeps in reserve a new, untested possibility of release, an open and unknown sea on which her heroine sets sail from her Ithaca. And it is with a fineness of scruple, an artistic delicacy quite beyond praise, that Miss Suckow shifts her point of view in the last chapter so that all that we know of Marjorie's launching forth on an adventure achieved in Colorado, is what her mother tells with maternal pride to the ladies of the Tourist Club back in Buena Vista.

Faber is decidedly a thesis novel. The problem is that of the readjustment to life of a man who has lost five and a half years as prisoner of war. It is complicated by the fact that his heredity and early environment had been such as to leave him with no strong roots, and by the further facts that his wife has come under the influence of a leader in the movement for the rehabilitation of children, always referred to as the Princess, has become her closest ally and friend, and through her has acquired a dependant, the widow of a revolutionist, toward whom Faber reaches out unconsciously as a plant toward the sun. This is the diagram which stands out starkly throughout the book, with none of the rich efflorescence of miscellaneous life which grew over the themes in The Gooseman and The World's Illusion. Faber is naturally an isolated character, and his re-approach to life is desultory and hesitating, but the others as well seem to live chiefly for their problem, apart from the world. They are unreal, partly because they are so largely symbols in a theorem, partly because they show dimly like wraiths through the mist of translation. Wasserman's Faber, like Rolland's Clerambault, is a product—one might say a casualty—of the War.

ROBERT MORSS LOVETT.

A Mercary's First Lord

Lord Timothy Dexter of Newburyport, Masstts, by J. P. Marquand. New York: Minton Balch and Company. 378 pages. $3.50.

IME the first Lord in the younited States of A mercary Now of Newburyport it is the voise of the peopel and I cant Help it so Let it goue"—Lord Timothy Dexter spelled as he lived—freely. He was so very free from the trammels which beset other men that a "peopel" which had only just struck rank and title out of its constitution raised its "voise" and called him Lord.

It was a happy investment in Continental currency rather than accident of birth which first raised Dexter to a position worthy of a man of his large inclinations. Up to that time he had lived unsuspected as a tanner. But after Alexander Hamilton had rearranged national credit, Dexter moved to a palace, filled his cellar choicely, and became a gentleman. Even then he made it a strict rule always to be sober in the morning, and it was probably before lunch that he decided to ship mittens and warming pans to the West Indies, a famous venture which astonished the world before, and even more after, its success.

> I cleared sevinty nine per sent the pans they made yous of them for Coucking—very good masser for Coukey—blessed good in Deade missey got nise handel Now burn my fase . . .

Such a man is surely worth the affectionate study of his countrymen.

When, by the voice of the people, he became Lord Dexter, he neglected no magnificence that he could think of. He employed a poet laureate, dressed him in a handsome livery trimmed with stars, and crowned him with great ceremony in the garden. Like the Pharaohs he erected his tomb—with the temple of Reason upon it—and prepared himself

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a coffin "panted whit in side and out side touched with green Nobel trimmings uncommon Lock so I can take the kee in side and have fier works in the toume pipes & tobacker & a speaking trumpet and a bibel to read & sum good songs." Then to go a step farther he rehearsed his funeral in all splendor, and beat his wife afterwards because she had not shed enough tears. His last bequests to his fellow men were a remarkable museum and—even more remarkable—a book. The museum, alas, was sold at unfeeling auction a few years after Dexter's death, but A Pickle for the Knowing Ones, containing all the wisdom of "the Greatest Philosopher in the Western World," still exists for the profit of posterity.

Mr. Marquand writes this biography with imagination and spirit. His fault (a reviewer must point out at least one or lose the confidence of his reader) is in trying to direct and interpret too much a story which should tell itself; but it is a fault easily forgiven for his having written the story at all. It is the sort of book which ought to be written. We have facts in the encyclopedia at our elbow, but how shall we fasten to a date the color and smell and taste of the times around it? The caricature genius of a Lord Dexter reflects in its very eccentricity the people who were first amazed by it. A character whose talent is to make men laugh, who does it greatly, giving his life to the art, becomes a minor god in the mythology of history, a link between eras of time, uniting men generations apart in a genial pervasive tradition of laughter. There is too little laughter in history.

"A good laff," said Lord Dexter, "is better than Crying." He had gout, he had a scolding wife, a dissolute son, a grasping son-in-law. So he knew. He knew the balm that could heal all his ills as soon as the Knowing Ones were gathered around the punch bowl. It is too bad that Laurence Sterne, who lived "in a constant endeavor to fence against the infirmities of ill-health and other evils of life, by mirth," should never have met his Walter Shandy come to life—in antithesis. For imagine Walter Shandy shorn of his erudition, his authorities, his Plato, his Theophrastus, his "Cardan, or Budæus, or Petrarch, or Stella"; imagine him as unlearned as you know him learned, but just as serious in following the dictates of profound ignorance as he was those of vast knowledge: you have Lord Timothy Dexter. Both have faith in themselves. They are masters of their destinies. One guides himself at every crisis in life, at every minutest turn of humdrum household existence, by the written wisdom of the philosophers. The other, having lived ignorant, illiterate, untouched by any ordinary cultivation of the mind, crowns his days by writing a philosophical book. Both have that sort of simplicity called quixotic, but they have also the inexpressible humanness which makes Don Quixote a living figure instead of a satiric formula. Both lived, the immortal of fiction, and the mortal man, and there has been more salutary laughter in the world in consequence.

E. Vincent.

Contributors

Elizabeth Shepley Sergeant, author of French Perspectives and Shadow-Shapes, in this issue contributes another of her portraits of contemporary Americans.

W. E. Burghart Du Bois is editor of The Crisis, and has served as Special Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary to Liberia.

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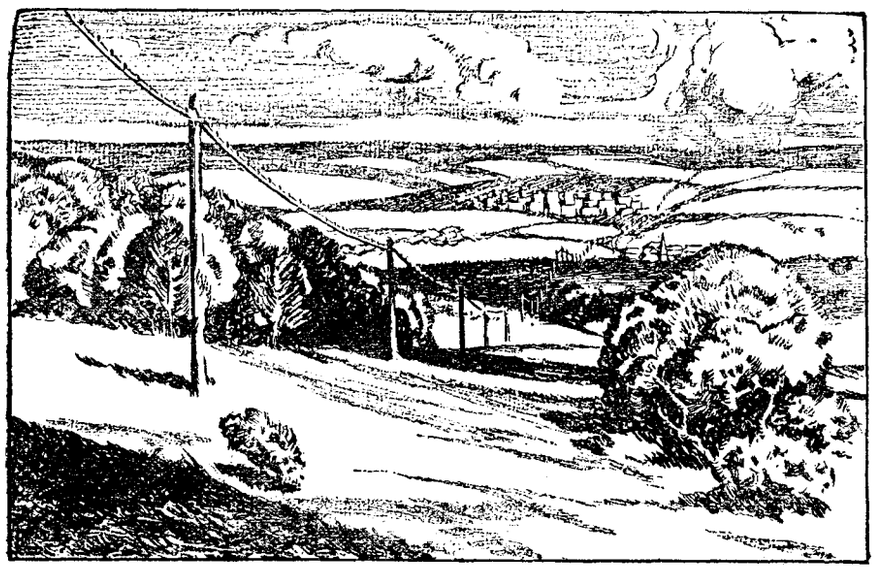

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The New York-Chicago telephone cable has been completed and is now in service. A triumph of American telephone engineering, the new cable is the result of years of research and cost $25,000,000 to construct. Its first reach extended along the Atlantic seaboard, then steadily westward until this last long section to Chicago was put into service.

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